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MĀCĪTĀJS OSV. GULBIS

ZIEMAS SVĒTKU ROZE

TANĪ laikā... Tā sākas Ziemssvētku stāsts. Un kas tas bija par laiku? Vecajai Ziemssvētku dziesmai taisnība. Tas bija ziemas laiks. Bargs, nežēlīgs, tumšs. Nakts laiks. Visuvarenā nakts bija padzinusi dienu, un diena, aiziedama, bija paņēmusi sauli līdz. Un ja arī šajā laikā saule paspīdēja, tad tā bija ziemas saule. Bet ziemas saulei rokas saltas. Tie retie pumpuri, kas viņas rokās atmostas, drīz mirst. Kails stāvēja tas dārzs, pa kuru, laipns kā pavasar's, Dievs kādreiz bija staigājis. Un kā koki ziemas saltumā stiepj saulei pretī savas rokas, pavasaŗa lūgdamies, tā tanī laikā lūdzās pavasaŗa visa cilvēce - tas dārzs, ko dēstījis reiz bija Dievs.

Un, redzi, tad tas notika. Visattālākajā dārza stūrī ērkšķu krūma zarā izplauka roze. Tāpēc jau arī Ziemassvētku dziesma dzied: Es skaistu rozīt' zinu... Kristus roze. Par šo pašu Kristus rozi runādams ap. Pāvils savā teologa valodā saka: "Bet kad laiks bija piepildījies, tad Dievs sūtīja savu dēlu, dzimušu no sievas, noliktu zem bauslības, lai izpirktu tos, pār kuŗiem valdīja bauslība un ka mēs bērna tiesības iegūtum." (Gal. 4, 4.5).

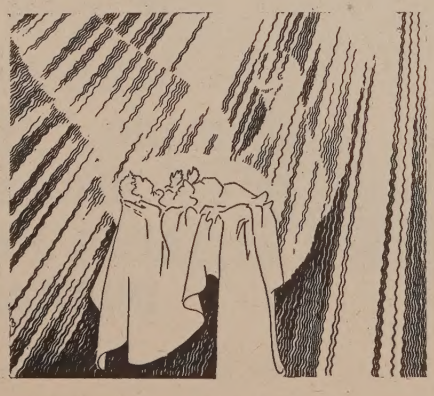
Lūka saka - šai Kristus rozei atplaukstot, debesu draudze slavējusi Dievu, nedaudzus, izbijušos ganus apspīdējis "tā Kunga spožums," eņģelis nonācis no debesīm. Mūsu laiku cilvēkam dažkārt šķiet, tas esot par daudz sacīts. Tas esot pārspīlēts. Nē. Ja tiešām "Dievs tik ļoti pasauli mīlējis, ka savu vienpiedzimušo dēlu devis, lai neviens, kas viņam tic, nepazustu, bet dabūtu mūžīgo dzīvību" (Jāņa ev. 3, 16) - un tas patiesi tā ir - tad sacīts vēl ir gaužām maz. Ja visi bēdīgie un noskumušie, aizlaustie un apdzisušie, pēc taisnības izsalkušie un vajātie šajā naktī būtu sanākuši vienuviet un, ceļos metušies, būtu teikuši un slavējuši Dievu - Dievs nebūtu vēl diezgan godināts. Ja visi zvaigžņu logi tonakt atvērtos un Dieva eņģeļi pa atvērtajiem logiem lūkotos, - ja visi zemes koki šajā naktī plauktu un uzziedētu visi zemes ziedi - arī tad vēl svētās nakts brīnums nebūtu diezgan daudzināts: "Dievs ir parādīts miesā, taisnots garā, eņģeļu skatīts, sludināts tautām..." (1. Tim. 3, 16).

Bet kas ir rozes zieds, ja nav neviena, kas par viņu priecātos? Un ko līdz debess mūzika, ja nav neviena, kas to dzird? Un ko līdz saules stars, kas gulētājam acīs krīt? - Aklais neredzēs, kurlais nedzirdēs, un gulētājam saules nevajag.

Gul tanī naktī Erods savā pilī, gul rakstu mācītāji un farizēji Jeruzalemē, gul visa Betleme kā ērkšķa zars zem sniega. Un taču tieši tur bij izplaukusi Kristus roze!

Tā ir skumja valoda, ko runā evaņģelists Jānis, - jo skumjāka tāpēc, ka to runā mīlestības un gaismas apustulis: "Gaisma spīd tumsībā, bet tumsība to neuzņēma... Viņš nāca pie savējiem, bet tie viņu neuzņēma"... Silītē Marija gulda savu pirmdzimto, "jo tiem citur nebija telpas tai mājvietā." Padzirdis, ka jauns ķēniņš dzimis, Erods meklē to nokaut, un Jāzeps un Marija un bērns autiņos - bēg no savas dzimtenes...

"Bet cik viņu uzņēma, tiem viņš deva varu kļūt par Dieva bērniem..." (Jāņa ev. 1, 12). Tas ir tas skaistais, ka tanī laikā un ap to pašu vietu ir arī cilvēki, kas palikuši nomodā, kas, tumsā palikuši, gaismas ilgojas, kas tad, kad putenis jau visus ceļus aizvilcis, vēl pavasarim pēdas dzen - tiem arī ziemas laikā uzzied rozes zieds, un vienā rozes ziedā uzsmaida pats pavasar's, jo tagadnes nīcībai pāri vini redz nākotnes godību un mazā, nevarīgā, autiņos tītā un silītē guldītā bērnā - karali, ķēniņu ķēniņu, Dieva dēlu. Tiem Kristus roze zied. "Un gani bija ap to pašu vietu laukā, tie nomodā būdami sargāja naktī savus lopus. Un tā Kunga spožums tos apspīdēja un tie bijās ļoti. Bet eņģelis tiem sacīja: Nebīstieties, jo redzi, es jums pasludinu lielu prieku, kas visiem ļaudīm notiks, jo j u m s šodien Pestītājs dzimis..." (Lūk. 2). -



Un mums? Un mūsu laikmetā? Tumšs. Auksts. Nemīlīgs. Vaidi un nāves elpa. Aizputināts ceļš uz mājām, uz pavasari. Gul pasaul's varenie, gul visa cilvēce kā ērkšķu krūms zem sniega. Kur ir tie cilvēki, kas mūsu laikā palikuši nomodā? - Vai būtu prasīts pārāk daudz, ja prasītu - mums jābūt tiem, ja tie jau neesam? Vai tad mēs neilgojamies pēc gaismas un pēc pavasaŗa, pēc miera un pēc labā prāta, pēc taisnības un Dieva valstības virs zemes? Un vai mums nevaj'g Pestītāja? Paliksim nomodā savā laikmetā! Ticēsim pavasarim! Vēl Kristus roze žied! Pasaules tumsu izkliedēt tā nespēj. Pasaules šāpes remdināt nevar. Pasaules varenie to nostumj no sava loga palodzes, lai Kristus roze viņiem skatu neaizsedz. Vīst Kristus roze pasaul's gudro grāmatās. Lai viņa tavā sirdī zied! Cilvēka sirds arī ir ērkšķu krūms - ass, piesnidzis. Kristīgs cilvēks - kas tas ir? Rozes zieds uz ērkšķa zara. Lai tavā sirdī Kristus roze zied, tad arī tumsā gaisma būs un kaut ar' visus ceļus aizvilkusi ziema - tev sirdī tomēr koklēs pavasar's un ērkšķi nesaplosīs mūs un sirds būs saldas smaržas pilna... Tāpēc jau arī vecā Ziemssvētku dziesma lūdz - un lūgsim arī mēs:

Tu rozīt' skaistā, jaukā,
Tu puķīt' svētākā,
Kam gribi ziedēt laukā?
Zied' manā sirsniņā!
Kas ticībā Tev' kopj,
Tam sirds no saldas smaržas
Un dvēs'le pilna top.

PRĀVESTS J. ĶULLĪTIS

VĒL MIRDZUMS DIEVIŠĶAIS NAV ZVAIGZNĒS DZĒSTS

1951. g. ZIEMSVĒTKOS

REDZIET, KĀDU MĪLESTĪBU TEVS MUMS IR PARĀDĪJIS, KA TIEKAM SAUKTI DIEVA BĒRNI. 1. Jāņa v. 3, 1.

KRISTĪGIE brāļi un māsas, tautieši un tautietes USA un plašajā pasaulē!

Ziemsvētki jau no bērnu dienām ir mūsu mīļākie un skaistākie svētki. Vecāki sirsnīgi tos gatavoja, mēs karsti ilgodamies tos gaidījām. Kad beidzot pienāca ilgi gaidītais vakars, māte uzģērba mums svētku drēbes un ieveda mūs gaiši apgaismotā istabā, kur neskaitāmās svecītēs mirdzēja zaļā Ziemsvētku eglīte. Kamēr mēs gaismas apžilbināti stāvējām kā apstulbuši, māte mūs skūpstīja un sacīja: ''Debesu Tēvs mums lielu prieku ir sagādājis. Viņš šovakar savu Dēlu ir sūtījis, kas mūs visus par Dieva bērniem dara. Pateiksimies par to, ka viņš, Dieva dēls, nāk arī pie mums, un dziedāsim viņu uzņemot:

''Ak, saldais, mīļais Jēzulīņ!
Nāc, taisies mīkstu spilventiņ'
Un dusi manā sirsniņā,
Ka Tu man paliec prātiņā.''

Pēc tam māte izdalīja dāvaniņas, ko debesu bērns atnesis zemes bērniem.

Ak mīļās, baltās bērnu dienas, ak saldais Ziemas svētku svētais bērna prieks! Cik tālu viss tas aizgājis pagātnē, un tikai garā mēs varam nostaigāt uz tēva sētu dzimtenē, kur sveši ļaudis min tās tekas, pa kurām mēs kādreiz staigājām. Bet tomēr, kad atskan Ziemas svētku zvani un dzirdam Ziemas svētku vēsti, daudz kas no šī siltā prieka saviļņo mūsu sirdi vēl tagad.

Ir pagājušas dienas un gadi un nākuši notikumi plašajā pasaulē un mūsu pašu dzīvē, ir cēlušies negaisi un vētras, kas gribējuši Ziemas svētku dievišķo gaismu izdzēst, to gaismu, kas vienīgi dzīvi un sirdi var sasildīt.

No šiem notikumiem atcerēsimies tikai dažus. Kad 1940. g. tuvojās Ziemas svētki, tad komūnisti gribēja tos noliegt, bet beidzot tomēr tos atļāva ar piezīmi, ka tas notiekot beidzamo reizi, jo reliģija esot katra cilvēka privāta lieta un

tamdēļ nedrīkstot darbu kavēt. Atceros šos Ziemas svētkus kā vienus no visskaistākajiem. Bezdievīgā valdība bija noliegusi uz tirgus pārdot eglītes, jo to ciršana apdraudot mežu augšanu, bet daži draudzes vecāji no sava meža atveda tās skaistākās un kuplākās egles. Baznīcas koris bija izklīdis, jo komūnistu valdība bija paziņojusi, ka neviens skolotājs nedrīkst palikt draudzes darbā kā diriģents vai ērģelnieks, jo, lūk, skola esot šķirta no baznīcas. Bet kad tuvojās šie Ziemsvētki, tad saradās kopā atkal vecie dziedātāji un nāca daudzi jauni klāt, starp tiem arī skolnieki, neskatoties uz bezdievīgās priekšniecības aizliegumu. Sameklējām arī diriģentu, pensionētu skolotāju V., kurš bija darbojies agrāk kā skolotājs un koru diriģents Bauskas apkārtnē. Viņš labprāt ķērās vēlreiz pie diriģenta zižļa, sacīdams: Gribu vēl beidzamo reizi diriģēt, un ja arī antikrista kalpi man atņemtu pensiju, tā man tā kā tā ilgi vairs nebūs vajadzīga. Kad pienāca Ziemsvētku vakars, sirmā Jelgavas Sv. Annas baznīca bija dievlūdzēju pārpildīta. Daudziem atmirdzēja asaras acīs, kad baznīcas koris, neskatoties uz bezdievju draudiem, sirmā diriģenta vadībā iesāka dievkalpojumu ar pazīstamo koru dziesmu: Klusa nakts... Sevišķi iespaidīga bija arī otrā koru dziesma - prof. J. Vītola ''Dievišķais mirdzums.'' Kad atskanēja vārdi ''Vēl mirdzums dievišķais nav zvaigznēs dzēsts'' - visiem bija sajūta: Paldies Dievam, ka cilvēki nespēj izdzēst zvaigžņu mirdzumu un nespēs arī noslāpēt dievišķo Ziemsvētku gaišumu.

Ticīgā skolotāja priekšsajūta bija bijusi pareiza: jaunā gada sākumā viņš aizgāja Dieva priekšā. Lai svētīta viņa piemiņa, jo uz viņu zīmējas mūsu Pestītāja vārdi: Kas mani apliecinās cilvēku priekšā, to es apliecināšu sava Tēva priekšā, kas ir debesīs.

Ir pienākuši 1951.g. Ziemsvētki. Pasaule ir sadalīta divās naidīgās nometnēs, kuras abas pastiprināti bruņojas. Sprāgst vienā un otrā pusē atombumbas, pagaidām tikai izmēģinājuma dēļ, bet tās sludina totālu iznīcību, sacelļ putekļus un dūmus, kas aizsedz sauli. Korejā jau plosās asiņains karš, kurš prasījis arī jau dažu latvju jaunekļu dzīvības, kurš radījis jaunus bēglu pulkus. Vai jaunā gadā šis kara ugunsgrēks izdzisīs jeb ies plašumā, to neviens nezin. Dūmos un ugunīs mēs atstājām dzimteni, dūmi un uguns mums rēgojas priekšā. Bet nebīsties! Vēl mirdzums dievišķais nav zvaigznēs dzēsts! Tā ir tā dievišķā mīlestība, kura dara mūs par Dieva bērniem. Pasaulē tagad ir daudz patmīlības, naida un cietsirdības un netikai antikrista valstībā, bet arī kristīgājās tautās. Mīlestība tomēr beidzot uzvarēs un valdīs. Ziemsvētkos mēs sludinām nevis cilvēku mīlestību, kura ātri atdziest un pat pārvēršas naidā, bet Dieva mīlestību. Dieva mīlestība paliek uzticīga mums grēciniekiem līdz pasaules galam. Jēzū Kristū Dievs ir atklājis šo mīlestību, kura pieder pie Viņa būtības. Bez šīs mīlestības Dievs nebūtu mūsu mīļais debesu Tēvs. Kad pasaules patmīlība un naids mūs sarūgtina, mēs zinam, pie kā iet, pie tā, kas sacīja: Jaunu bausli es jums dodu, ka jūs viens otru mīlējat, itin kā es jūs esmu mīlējis, lai arī jūs tāpat cits citu

mīlētu. No tam visi pazīs, ka jūs esat mani mācekļi, ja jums būs mīlestība savā starpā.

No mīlestības arī pazīs, vai kāds pieder pie Ziemsvētku draudzes, vai nē. Pie pirmās Ziemsvētku draudzes nepiederēja ļaudis Betlemē, jo tie savā cietsirdībā neuzņēma savās mājās Mariju un Jāzepu, bet tiem ierādīja vietu lopu kūtī; nepiederēja arī varizēji un rakstu mācītāji, jo tie liekulīgi turēja sevi par svētiem, kuŗiem Pestītājs nav vajadzīgs; nepiederēja Erods, jo tas domāja tikai par savas varas saglabāšanu un mēģināja pat Jēzus bērnu nonāvēt; nepiederēja arī romiešu ķeizars Augusts, jo tas savā bagātībā un varas pārpilnībā iedomājās, ka viņš pats ir jaunā laimes laikmeta nesējs. Bet piederēja vienkāršie nabaga gani, kuŗi ar skaidru, mīļu un ticīgu sirdi uzņēma eņģeļu vēsti par Pestītāja dzimšanu, gāja meklēja Viņu un atraduši to - pielūdza.

Uguns iedegas pie uguns. Lai Dieva mīlestība iededzina mūsu sirdīs mīlestību pret Viņa sūtīto Pestītāju un pret mūsu brāļiem un māsām. Kāds amerikāņu žurnāls raksta par nabaga zēnu, kuŗš, pazaudējis visus tuviniekus briesmīgajā kaŗā Korejā, nevarējis smaidīt vairs bērna nevainīgajā priekā, bet atguvis atkal šo smaidu, kad kristīgā brāļu un māsu mīlestība sākusi par viņu rūpēties. Cik nebūs tādu latviešu bērnu, kuŗiem tēvs kritis kaŗā un māte viena pati viņus audzina, cik tēvi un mātes nedzīvo nometnēs Vācijā, kuŗiem dēli krituši vai pazuduši bez vēsts, vai nava aizsniedzami. Pie viņiem un citiem dzīves pabērņiem iesim Ziemsvētkos, tos ar kādu mīlestības zīmi iepriecināt. Darīsim to ar skaidru, mīļu un ticīgu sirdi, tad arī mēs piederēsim pie Ziemsvētku draudzes, kuŗai eņģelis nes prieka un Dieva mīlestības vēsti: Nebīstieties, jo redzi, es jums pasludinu lielu prieku, kas visiem ļaudīm notiks: Jo jums šodien Pestītājs dzimis, Dāvida pilsētā, kas ir Kristus, tas Kungs.

Ziemsvētkos pie gaišās eglītes ar daudziem esmu kopā stāvējis draudzēs, skolās un ģimenēs. Lai arī tagad izklīduši visā pasaulē, nostāsimies zem Kristus zvaigznes, tad arī nomanīsim, ka Ziemsvētku gaisma un miers nāk mūsu sirdīs.

Novēlu visiem svētīgus mīlestības svētkus, visiem, kas mīl mūsu Kungu Jēzu Kristu viņa neiznīcigajā godībā. (Pāv. vēst. efez. 6, 24).

Āmen.

LEONIDS BREIKŠS

Mana atgriešanās pie Kristus

SVETVAKARA PĀRDOMAS.
CEĻU MEKLEJOT.

TAS man bija gŗūti jau no jaunām dienām: iet savu ceļu un nezināt, kur es eju. Un vēl vairāk man bija gŗūti - dzīvot savu mūžu un nezināt, kam es viņu dzīvoju.

Jo patiesi to es gribēju atrast un izdibināt: kam par godu ir un pastāv viss redzamais un neredzamais.

Un to es gribēju uzzināt: kas cilvēka mūžā un kas pasaulē ir - augstāks par visu. Kas ir tas, kas mums licis šurp nākt: piedzimt un dzīvot un nomirt. Un no kuŗas saules mēs šurp pārnākam, pirms mēs esam dzimuši. Un kurp mēs atkal aizejam, kad mēs esam nomiruši.

Tad nu es esmu gribējis atrast zīmes, kas par visu to stāstītu un liecinātu.

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Es esmu stāvējis pie šūpuļiem un kapiem. Es atceros, kā manas vecākās māsas nomira. Un visvairāk tad es biju nesaprašanā par vienu: uz kurieni viņas aizgāja?

Bet ir miruši daudzi man tuvi un tāli cilvēki un arvien mana sirds ir vaicājusi: kurp atkal aizgājuši šie?

Tā nu mana sirds klusībā nojauta, ka aiz šīs dzīves ir kāda cita. Un ka ir kāds liels ceļš, pa kuŗu cilvēki dodas.

Bet - kurp viņi dodas?

Tad es ieklausījos cilvēku valodās, un dzirdēju, ka viņi aizejot - pie Dieva.

Un nu es sāku meklēt zīmes, kas par Dievu liecinātu.

Un es redzēju: tādu zīmju bija pilna visa pasaule.

Patiešām - to es drīz ieraudzīju, ka Viņš valda pār zemi un debesīm.

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Kad es atceros, ko man māte vispirms mācīja, tad es atceros: viņa mani mācīja vakarā lūgšanu noskaitīt.

Es gan daudz ko no šīs lūgšanas nesapratu - vēl ilgus gadus.

Bet to vienu es sapratu: ka tas ir Viņam par godu. Tam, Kas ir pāri visam. Pāri cilvēkiem un zvēriem. Pāri mirušiem un dzīviem. Pāri tam, ko es redzēju, un pāri tam, ko es jutu.

Tad nu es sāku mācīties - Viņu godināt un Viņam paklausīt.

Jo es domāju: reiz Viņš mūs šajā saulē ir sūtījis, tad mums Viņam ir jāpaklausa.

Jo Viņa priekšā mēs atkal stāsimies, kad būsim no šejienes aizgājuši līdzīgi tiem, kas ir miruši mūsu acu priekšā.

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Viena liela vaicāšana manā mūžā ir stāvējusi pāri pār visu: ko Viņš grib no mums? Kādus īsti Viņš mūs grib redzēt? Kā mums ir jādzīvo un kas mums jādara, lai mēs Viņa prātu bītu pildījuši?

Jo to es esmu sapratis, ka šurp mēs esam sūtīti, lai Viņa prātu piepildītu.

Ilgi, ilgi es esmu savā sirdī vaicājis pēc tā, kas ir Viņa prāts.

Ilgi es esmu meklējis savu pareizo ceļu.

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Dažā labā skolā es esmu bijis. Daudzus cilvēkus esmu redzējis: augstus un zemus.

Bet neviens man nav mācējis parādīt - ceļu pie Viņa.

Un ja kāds man tomēr ir rādījis un parādījis, tad es to neesmu mācējis ieraudzīt.

PROF. K. KUNDZIŅŠ

Virs zemes vai debesīs?

KO JĒZUS MĀCĪJIS PAR DIEVA VALSTĪBU.

JĒZUM Kristum - to mēs visi skaidri izjūtam, lasot evaņģelijus - visur, kur viņš mācījis, aicinājis, iepriecinājis un palīdzējis, acu priekšā aizvien stāvējis kāds augsts pilnības ideāls, kāda gaiša vizija par dzīvi, kas pavisam citāda, nekā patreizējā zemes dzīve ar tās maldu mērķiem un vilšanos, netaisnībām un nežēlībām. Šo pilnības atklāsmi viņš saņēmis no sava Tēva debesīs (sal. Mat. 11, 25; Lūk. 10,21) un tās saturu viņš parasti ietvēris vārdos: Dieva (vai debesu) valstība.

Tā bija īpaša pasaule, ko varētu saukt arī par ''pārpasauli'', kuŗā viņš dzīvoja un elpoja, ko viņš pats nesa sevī un kas viņu darīja laimīgu (sal. ievadvārdus Lūk. 10,21).

Tās jaukumu viņš tomēr ņepaturēja vienīgi sev, bet centās to nostādīt arī savu klausītāju un sekotāju acu priekšā. Viņa sirds kļuva īksma, kad viņam atklājās, ka arī citi zemes bērni, it sevišķi ar skaidrām bērnu sirdīm apveltītie un pazemīgie, sāpju nesēji, pie malas nostumtie un vajātie, nav izslēgti no šīs svētlaimības, par cik viņu krūtīs smeldz ilgas pēc Dieva un Viņa mīlestības pilnības. Sal. Jēzus ''kalna sprediķa'' ievadu, tā saucamos makarismus jeb svētlaimības vārdus Mat. 5, 1 sek.

Tik tālu, šķiet, visi Bībeles lasītāji Jēzus mācības izpratnē būs vienis prātis. Bet nu, kā piedzīvojumi māca, mūsu laiku visai reāli noskaņotam cilvēkam rodas jautājums: kur tad pēc Jēzus mācības sagaidāma šīs Dieva valstības īstenošanās jeb piepildīšanās: virs zemes, labākā (īsti ''brālīgā'') individu un tautu kopdzīvē resp. taisnīgākā dzīves iekārtā, vai pavisam citā dzīves plāksnē, kā tas izteikts, piemēram, dziesmas vārdos: ''Dvēs'le, gribi tu to atrast, to virs zemes nemeklē. Ja tev tīk šo mantu saprast, meklē v i ņ ā pasaulē''?

Atbilde varēs būt tikai viena. Visa Jēzus darbība, arī tur, kur viņš palīdzējis laicīgās bēdās, savā dziļākā būtībā un pēdējā intencijā ir pievērsta d v ē s e l i s k a-

j a m momentam. Atcerēsimies kaut stāstu par 10 spitālīgo dziedināšanu Lūk. 17, 11-18, kur tas skaidri parādās Jēzus pēdējos vārdos, vai sarunu ar mācekļiem pēc 5000 ļaužu paēdināšanas Mark. 8, 14-21. Sevišķi spilgti šo dvēselisko vai ''mūžīgās dzīvības'' momentu (ga - rīgā cilvēka tapšanu un augšanu) izceļ Jāņa evaņģelijs tādos stāstos, kā piem. sarunā ar Nikodēmu (3. nod.), ar samariešu sievu pie Jēkaba akas (4. nod.) un citur. Acīm redzot Dieva jeb debesu valstības saturs pēc Jēzus mācības būtiski ir pavisam kas cits nekā tā saucamās ''zemes lietas''. Vācu teoloģija šī satura apzīmēšanai radījusi ļoti zīmīgu terminu ''das ganz Andere'' (R. Otto, K. Bārts). Uz šo neparasto, neikdienišķo, irracionālo Dieva valstības raksturu tad nu arī norāda daudzi Jēzus izteicieni. Jau tas fakts vien liek daudz ko padomāt, ka Jēzus par Dieva vai debesu valstību runājis galvenām kārtām līdzībās, pielīdzinādams to ''tīrumā apslēptai mantai'', vai brīnišķai bezgala vērtīgai pērlei, bet Dieva valstības tikko saredzamos sākumus zemē iesētam, niecīgam sēklas graudiņam. Izšķirīga nozīme šai ziņā ir teicieniem, ka Dieva valstība tagad gan jau sastopama apslēptā veidā, ''noslēpumā'' (Mark. 4,11), bet nevis vēl ''spēkā'' un ''godībā'' (Mark. 9,1). Šeit jāatceras arī pazīstamie Jēzus vārdi Jāņa evaņģelijā (18, 36): ''Mana valstība n a v no šīs pasaules.''

Vai ar to būtu teikts, ka Jēzum laicīgās dzīves reālisms ir pilnīgi svešs un ka viņam trūkst jebkādas intereses par zemes lietām, par reālās dzīves trūkumu novēršanu un ļaunumu pārvarēšanu? Tas būtu visai pārsteidzīgs slēdziens. Viņš taču aicina nevien mācīt, sludināt, bet arī dziedināt slimos un palīdzēt tādiem, kas ''krituši slepkavu rokās.'' Viņš pats atkal un atkal iežēlojas par ļaudīm, kas ir postā, un tiem palīdz. Viņš aicina savus mācekļus ''vienu no šiem vismazākiem,'' ja tam slāpst, dzirdināt kaut ar lāsi vēsa ūdens (Mat. 10,42) un par kristīgas dzīves mēraukla uzstāda žēlsirdības darbus dzīves grūtdieņu labā (Mat. 24, 34. sek). Visu to apsveŗot, ar pilnu tiesību varam jautāt, vai tad šādos mīlestības un palīdzības darbos, vismaz pa daļai, nereālizējās Dieva valstība jau šīs zemes dzīves ietvaros?

Tiešām tā: tās ir jau Dieva valstības nākšanas ''zīmes'' (sal. Mat. 11,5), un tanīs jau sāk reālizēties Dieva valstības brīnišķais saturs, kaut gan tikai ''zināmā mērā'' un ''pa daļai''. Jēzus pats kļūst gaiša prieka pilns, kad kāds stars no pārpasaules, ko viņš sauc par Dieva valstību, krīt jau šīs zemes dzīves tumsā. Ja Dievs kādam dāvina atklāsmes brīdi, ja dvēsele, kas bija tumšu spēku (ļaunu garu) varā, tiek atbrīvota, ja grēcinieks atgriežas un nožēlā saņem piedošanu un spēku sākt jaunu dzīvi, tad šādi gadījumi ir tādi ''gaiši stari'' vai simptomi, kas liecina, ka Dieva valstība ''ir tuvu klāt'', ka tās vārti jau tagad veŗas un tās gaisma spīd (sal. Mt. 12, 28; Lūk. 23, 42. 43). Patiesi veŗas un patiesi spīd. Bet vai jau visā pilnībā spēkā un

godībā? Protams, ka nē. Bet gan "daļēji", mazumā.

ARTURS PRIEDĪTIS

Prāts un ticība

Jēzus ir pārāk liels reālists un reizē pārāk tālredzīgs, lai mācītu, ka zemes dzīves ietvaros varētu īstenoties v i s a Dieva valstības pilnība. Pat vislielākā ārējā labklājība virs zemes, vislabākā politiskā, sabiedriskā vai cita kāda iekārta pati par sevi nevar būt Dieva lielo mērķu piepildījums (Mk. 8, 36; 10, 42-44; 12,17). Tās labākā gadījumā var būt simptomi, ka cilvēki savos centienos ir ceļā uz Dieva valstību, ka viņu sirdis ilgojas pēc tās un viņi no sirds grib palīdzēt saviem brāļiem. Dievs neapšaubāmi daudziem saviem ļaudīm devis īpašas dāvanas un īpašu uzdevumu darboties sociālā laukā: palīdzēt tādiem, kas ir postā, apkaļot slimības un dziedināt slimos, radīt cilvēcīgas dzīves iespējas dzīves grūtdieņiem. Pats Jēzus, dievišķās mīlestības spārnots, ievadījis šos darbus. Viņš arī laulību un ģimeni uzskatījis par svētiem Dieva iestādījumiem un skumis, ja šie svētumi nav turēti cieņā. Nevar būt šaubu par to, ka viņš gribējis, lai arī plašākās sabiedrības attiecības un tautu kopdzīves kārtotos brālīgu ģimenes attiecību garā. Nevainīgu asiņu izliešana un vardarbība ir riebums viņa Debestēva acīs (Mat. 23, 35) un par to reiz tiks prasīti norēķini. Jēzus pats, cik mums zināms, nav atkārtojis Vecās derības praviešu - Jesajas un Mikus vārdus par laikmetu, kad kaļa ieroči tiks iznīcināti resp. pārkalti par lemešiem un sirpjiem, bet šie vārdi, šķiet, labi iekļautos arī viņa mācībā.

Tomēr, ja arī viss tas virs zemes tiktu reiz sasniegts - Jēzus nekur nav sacījis, ka tas t i k s sasniegts - Dieva valstība vēl nebūtu kļuvusi par īstenību. Daudz, visai daudz būtu panākts - un tomēr cilvēce aizvien vēl būtu tikai "ceļā uz to." Zemes lietas un zemes būtnes aizvien paliks tās, kas viņas ir - sāpju, grēka un nīcības varai pakļautas radītas lietas. Dieva valstības augstais pilnības mērķis stāv pāri tam visam, citā "plāksnē." Tā var kļūt par īstenību tikai tad, kad būs notikusi lielā pārvērtība, par kuļu visskaidrāk runā apustulis Pāvils (1. Kor. 15, 50 un 54) un Jāņa atkl. gr. (21, 4-5), proti, kad viss vecais būs pagājis un viss būs kļuvis jauns. Evaņģēliji liecina, ka tāds pats ir bijis arī Jēzus uzskats (Mark. 12, 25). "Ko acs nav redzējusi un auss nav dzirdējusi un kas neviena cilvēka sirdī nav nācis, to Dievs ir sagatavojis tiem, kas Viņu mīl."

NOSLĒGUMĀ gribu aizrādīt uz negātīvajām sekām, kādas var radīt tiklab prāta pārvērtēšana un pielūgšana, kā arī prāta noniecināšana. Savu iespēju robežās prāts pilnam pilda savu uzdevumu. Tas sekmīgi spēj kalpot arī tiem dvēseles spēkiem, kas pārāki par to. Bet no prāta nedrīkstam prasīt tādu uzdevumu pildīšanu, kādiem tas nemaz nav piemērots, nedz drīkstam prātu pavisam atmest kā nevajadzīgu. Diemžēl, tieši tādi cilvēce vēstures gaitā rīkojusies. Tā allaž slīdējusi no viena ekstrēma otrā, no vienas katastrofas otrā. Kas notiek mūsu dienās?

Vinē kādā no savām grāmatām saka: "Modernai elkdievībai ir divi altāri Uz viena tiek ziedots materijai, uz otra prātam. Uz abiem altāriem plūst cilvēku asinis."

Kautgan nu jau pagājuši simts gadi, kopš šie vārdi teikti, tie joprojām vēl spēkā. Jau kopš vairākiem gadsimtiem pastāv tendence prāta lomu pārvērtēt. Racionālistiskās zinātnes straujais progress iet roku rokā ar morālisko disciplīnu sabrukumu. Arī baznīca jūtas nospiesta aizstāvēšanās pozicijās. Bet manuprāt tā dara nepareizi, ja aizstāvēdamās arī pati mēģina racionālizēties un radīt kautko līdzīgu racionālai teoloģijai. Taisni irracionālais elements taču ir tas, kas arī agresivajam ateismam piešķir spēku. (Hanss Barts grāmatā "Wahrheit und Ideologie," apcerēdams marksistiskās ideoloģijas vēsturisko attīstību, saka, ka pēc Marksa mācības "tikai tas, kas nostājies uz proletāriāta viedokļa spēj saprast materiālistisko dialektiku. Tikai pēc tam, kad a r t i c ī b a s u n g r i b a s a k t u notikusi identificēšanās ar proletāriāta viedokli, var sākt izprast un lietot dialektiku kā dabas un vēstures iztulkojuma principu.").

Runājot par šī laika traģiku, šveiciešu filozofs Deniss de Ružmons grāmatā "La part du diable" saka: "Irracionālisma eksplozija mūsu gadsimtenī liecina, kurp noved racionālisma ārprāts, ja tas ķeras pie reliģijas iznīcināšanas un pie reliģijas jūtu apspiešanas. Pēc tam, kad tas ir apkaļojis un izskaudis novecojušās reliģiskās paražas, tas tikpat metodiski ir aizkavējis jaunu reliģisku paražu (upuru, reliģisku svētku, gavēņu, morālisku un mistisku disciplīnu, lūgšanu un rituālu) rašanos."

Tad nav jābrīnās, ja pēc tam apspiestais irracionālais elements visus mākslīgos dambjus salauž un izraisās destruktīvās katastrofās, masu psichozēs un neurozēs, nacismā, komūnismā un līdzīgās kustībās. (Neaizmirsīsim, kādu lomu šinīs kustībās spēlē gājieni, parādes, demonstrācijas, lozungi, himnas, masu suģestija, sarkanie stūrīši, "svētbildes" - resp. vadoņu portrejas, ticība vadonim un viņa nemaldībai u.t.t.). Tad nav jābrīnās, ja cilvēki, no otras puses, aizraujas muļķīgās māņticībās un tumšās tautmaturģijās. Jo vairāk intelektuālisti šajāsparādībāsdiskriminēs reliģiskos "instinktus" un jo ilgāk tie vaimanās par kritiskā prāta bojā iešanu, jo drīzāk tie piedzīvos jaunas destruktīvas katastrofas.

Šie spēki ir nevis jāapspiež, kas nekad neizdosies, bet jāievirza gultnēs, kuŗās tie top konstruktīvi, kuŗās tiem vairs nav jābarojas no surrogātiem, bet no patiesībām, kas ir mūžīgas.

PRIECĪGUS SVĒTKUS
un laimīgu Jauno gadu mūsu lielajiem un mazajiem lasītājiem un pašaizliedzīgajiem līdzstrādniekiem!

Lai Ziemsvētku eņģelis uzrunā visus, kas miera, iepriecas un gaismas alkdami, arī šī laikmeta tumsā palikuši nomodā: Jums šodien Pestītājs dzimis! Lai visuvarenā Dieva Ziemsvētku dāvana - Pestītājs - Kristus līdz ar šī mēneša raksta Ziemsvētku izdevumu ienāk Jūsu mājās, iepriecē noskumušos, stiprina pagurušos, noglāsta vientuļos. Kristus ir mūsu cerība laikā un mūžībā! Lai viņa zvaigzne, Ziemsvētku naktī uzaususi, vada Jūs Jūsu ceļos arī Jaunajā gadā. Lai Dievs, tas Kungs pasargā Jūs no visa ļauna.

MĀJAS DRAUGA IZDEVNIECĪBA UN REDAKCIJA.

M. ROZENTĀLE

CHAOTISKAS IEZĪMES MŪSU TRIMDAS LIRIKĀ

NEVIENS nevar noliegt, ka 20. gadsimts, sevišķi pēdējos gados, nenestu sevī lielas pretrunas, kuŗu atrisināšanos vēl nesaredzam, ka nebūtu daudz nejēdzību, ko vēl nespējam novērst, bet nepareizi ir būt pārliecībā, ka pretrunas un nejēdzības ir tikai mūsu laikmeta lāsts resp. raksturīga pazīme. Nav bijis ilgstoši harmonisku laikmetu cilvēces vēsturē, bet tomēr ir visu šo laiku harmoniska dzeja, kas ir pārdzīvojusi laikmetus. Šos darbus lasot, jūtam personību garu, kas tos veidojušas.

Daži mūsu trimdas lirikas autori iedomājas, ka viņi sludina jaunu virzienu, ja grib izteikt savu laikmetu un sevi. To jau darījuši dzejnieki vienmēr, bet svarīgi ir - kā to dara. Nozīmīgs ir pamats, uz kā dzejnieks nostājās, vērodams savu laiku. Jākonstatē, ka vienam otram trimdas liriķim nav sava droša viedokļa, no kā tas vēro pasauli, bet tie ir sasieti laikmeta nejēdzību valgos, nespēdami tiem pāri pacelties, veidot kaut ko labāku un daiļāku.

Velta Sniķere saka - ''Šai disonansē izdrebēt līdz galam.'' Viņai gan vēl tēlojas kāda nākotnes gaišāka aina, ja viņa tālāk saka -

''Pirms sidrabaini šlāksies jaunais rīts,
Šai disonansei izdārdēt līdz galam.''

Protams, runa varētu būt tikai par šī laikmeta disonansi, jo jaunais laikmets nāks ar jaunu disonansi, kā ir bijis un būs. Bet Dzintars Sodums izjūt jau šo laiku kā smagumu, no kā tad bēg jutekļu reibumā -

''Mēs esam dzimuši šim laikam,
Šis laiks mums grūti jāiznes.
Vai jūti to? Un noliecos
Un tavus ceļus skūpstu es.''
(Beigu laiks)

Vislielākā neskaidrībā ar laiku un sevi nonācis O. Jēgens -

''Tev apziņā no posta pieredzētā
Ir sajucis, kas nolādams, kas svēts,
Un mute ņirdzīgus un ļaunus vārdus mētā.''
(Emigrants)

AUSTRA DĀLE

Kristus atnākšana

MIRDZ LAUKOS SNIEGS TIK BALTS UN NEAIZKARAMS,
KĀ NOLAISTIES TIK RETA PĀRSLA DRIKST;
KĀ ŠUPOJAMS KAS BŪTU, MAIGI SKARAMS,
UN GAISOS, LIEKAS, EŅĢ'ĻU SPĀRNI ŠVIKST.

KĀ SAPNĪ BRINIŠĶĪGĀ SLIDU LENĀM:
MAN APKĀRT BAZNĪCAS NO ZEMES AUG.
TĀM CAURI IZEJU ZEM VELVJU ENĀM,
JO DĀRGĀKO VĒL ACIS NEIERAUG'.

TUR MEMAIS STINGUMS VĒL UN KRUSTA BAIGUMS,
KAS DZIĻĀ NOSKUMŠANĀ GALVU LIEC;
ES MEKLĒJU, KUR KRISTUS DZĪVAIS MAIGUMS,
KUR BRĪNUMS TOP UN IZPLAUKST SVĒTAIS ZIEDS.

ĶAS TUMSĀ PALIKS, ZVANUS NEIZDZIRDIS,
ŠAI VAKARĀ, KAD NĀC TU GAIŠS UN LIEGS?
NĀC, SVECES AIZDEDZINI, AIZDEDZ SIRDIS,
TU SVĒTAIS BĒRNS, TU DIEVIŠĶĪGAIS PRIEKS!

+ + + + + +

Tā ir iestigšana sava laika nejēdzīgajā pusē, tīksminašanās ap to, tieksme izcelt riebīgo. Tālāk pa šo ceļu ejot, nonāk līdz gadsimtu senu svētumu pazemošanai, kas robežojas ar cilvēka vērtības pazemināšanu.

Šie dzejnieki, kas vēl tik virspusīgi skatās dzīves problēmās, ir savos dzejoļos devuši arī vaļsirdīgus raksturojumus paši par sevi. Iespējams, ka dažkārt tās ir tikai pozas. Bezmērķa, bezpienākuma dzīvi rāda V. Sniķeres dzejolis ''Es dzīvoju'' -

''Es dzīvoju,
Un satverot aiz krēpēm
Tramīgo vēju, dodos līdzi tālu,
Un aizmirstu, kas paliek ceļa malās,
Un neatceros iepriekšējo brīdi.''

Traģisku nesaskaņu pašam ar sevi rāda Ojāra Jēgena dzejolis ''Satikšanās.''

''Ir domas manējās kā samudžināts diegs,
Un netīkams un svešs pats sev es allaž liekos.''

To pašu izsaka Dz. Sodums dzejolī ''Pašportrets (1945)'' -

''Kas tikpat juceklīgs ir savā dzejā,
Cik pamatīgs un neizteiksmīgs sejā.
Sīks dzimis, nomirsi kā sīkums apvazāts.''

Tā ir veca atziņa, ka cilvēks ir sīks kosmā, bet jauna - ka ''apvazāts sīkums.'' Tik tālu šie autori stāv no cilvēka būtības īstās izpratnes. Viņi skatās šajā laikmetā ar īsredzīgu skatu, visu mērodami ar pieredzēto bezjēdzību. Un šo bezjēdzību labi apzinoties (Dz. Sodums ''Kads runā'') tomēr to atzīst par apdzejošanas vērtu. Tālākās konsekvences šīm domām attīstoties, var nonākt pie dzīves filozofijas, kas liek cilvēkam rāpot, ne celties, būt tuvāk dzīvniekam, no kā tas gadu tūkstošos gribējis aiziet, attīstoties un paceļoties. Nav nejaušība, ka šie dzejnieki arī neredz kādu garīgu virzītāju, garu, jūt dzīvē tikai primitīvākās cilvēka būtnes izpausmes. Dz. Sodums ceļ cilvēku Dieva kārtā -

''Man liekas, ai sieva,
Tu daiļā un lielā,
Kā dieve man būsi.''

Otrreiz Dievs pieminēts dzejolī ''Emigranta pavasaris'' un rakstīts ar mazo burtu:

''Caur strūklakas pirmo šalti
Saskatās bronzas mīlētāji, ko radījis
Mākslinieks kļūdains kā dievs.''

O. Jēgens raksta Pestītāju (''Skumība'') un Visvareno Lēmēju ar mazo burtu.

''Ak lēmēj visuvarenais, jel liec,
ka neazieju priekšlaikus jau veļos.''
(Māte)

Citur gan lietots lielais burts, dzejoļos ''Karavīra līgava'', ''Māte'', un ''Māksliniekam.'' Traģiski skan tās rindas, kurās autori reizē pazemina kā Dievu tā cilvēku. Dz. Sodums:

''Kam, mālu mīcītāj, bij tevim ļauts
Dot stipru prātu tam, kam trakuma par daudz?
Tā, vagabund, tu ej kā Dieva puspļāviens -''
(Pašportrets)

Ja jau sevi tik zemu vērtē, ko tad gan no sevis var izveidot, kam gan tad dzīve? Tad jau kritiens tik zems, ka uz pacelšanos grūti cerēt. Vēl nejēdzīgāku salīdzinājumu atrodam O. Jēgena sonetā ''Ievainotais'', kur lietota tik rupja un riebīga fraze, ka tā te nemaz neļaujas atkārtoties. Vai fraze iznākusi tik ''stipra'' tāpēc, ka attiecīgais vārds derīgs atskaņai? Vai tāda ir tiešām dzejnieka pārliecība, ka cilvēks nav nekas vairāk kā mēsli? Ja, kam tad vēl dzejai eksistēt, atliek tikai nejēdzībā nejēdzīgi bojā iet. Vajadzētu gan vairāk paškontroles, lai neieviestu dzejā tādus ''tēlus'', ko pašiem vēlāk būs neērti atzīt par saviem. Jo jādomā taču, ka minētie autori no šī domu dumbrāja reiz izkļūs. Kaut tās visas tiešām būtu pārejošas parādības mūsu lirikā, jo cilvēks nevar tālāk iet, nolicis sevi uz tik zemas pakāpes, bez lepnuma, bez vērtības apziņas, bez augstākās jēgas un sūtības apziņas. Laikmets nava cur vainīgs. Arī šinī laikmetā ir viss kas, nejēdzīgais blakus jēdzīgajām, daiļais līdzās nejaukajam, svarīgi, ko katrs redz, tas atkarīgs no gribas un ticības stipruma, skata skaidrības un dziļumu un tālumu redzēšanas spējām. Jāpriecājas, ka šādi uzskati mūsu dzejā nav bieži sastopami, mēs tomēr esam stipra cilts, kas spēs pacelties pāri arī šim bargajam laikmetam.

ALEKSANDRS LIEPA

BĒGĻU DRAUGS, KAM NEBIJA LAIKA ATPŪSTIES

DEŠUS gadus Dr. Silvestrs C. Maiklfelders (Michelfelder) nenogurdams bija strādājis Eiropas bēgļu, Eiropas izdzīto un sapostīto Eiropas baznīcu labā. Viņš vadīja organizāciju, kuŗai vairums mūsu lasītāju var pateikties par to, ka viņi atrodas Amerikas Savienotās Valstīs - tas ir - Luterāņu Pasaules Federāciju.

Šai rudenī Dievs aizsauca savu uzticamo kalpu pie sevis. Bet vēl dienu pirms viņu pārsteidza trieka, Dr. Maiklfelders savā pēdējā runā bija aicinājis Amerikas kristīgos nenogurt, palīdzot grūtdieņiem Eiropā un citās satricinātās un no līdzsvara izsistās pasaules zemēs.

Līdz 1945. gada vasarai Dr. Maiklfelders bija bijis mācītājs luterāņu draudzē Toledo, Ohaijo. Viņš 14 gadus bija uzticīgi kalpojis vienai un tai pašai draudzei. Bet tiklīdz izbeidzās otrs pasaules kaŗš, viņš devās uz Eiropu kā pirmais ASV luterāņu baznīcu palīdzības darba vadītājs bumbu nopostītajās zemēs. No tā laika viņš bija pastāvīgi uzturējies Ženevā, Šveicē, vadīdams Amerikas luterāņu palīdzības darbu Eiropā un kopš 1947. gada būdams arī Luterāņu Pasaules Federācijas eksekutīvais direktors.

''Baznīca nav baznīca, ja tā nerūpējas arī par fizisku vajadzību apmierināšanu,'' reiz sacīja Dr. Maiklfelders. ''Fizisks atbalsts dažkārt ir vairāk vērts nekā ''Dievs svēti'' pasacīšana. Atbalsts izsalkušam ir atbilde izsalkušā lūgšanai.''

Vadīdamies no šī principa, Dr. Maiklfelders izvērta Amerikas baznīcu palīdzības darbu Eiropā daudz plašākā apjomā nekā tas iesākumā bija iecerēts. Organizācija, kas bija domāta visvairāk tikai garīgās aprūpes veikšanai izpostītajās zemēs, Dr. Maiklfeldera vadībā izvērtās par plašu palīdzības organizāciju, kas visiem iespējamiem līdzekļiem palīdzēja realizēt to, ko bez mājas palikušie, bēgļi un izpostītie savās sirdīs lūdza. Bēgļu aprūpes nozare pie Luterāņu Pasaules Federācijas pa šiem gadiem palīdzējusi 80.000 bēgļiem atrast jaunas mājvietas gan Amerikā, gan Kanādā, gan Austrālijā, gan citās zemēs.

Neviena cita Eiropas bēgļu grupa nav tik tiešā veidā pārliecinājusies par Dr. Maiklfeldera ievadītā un vadītā darba svētīgumu kā mēs - latviešu bēgļi. Federācija palīdzējusi vairumam latviešu, kas tagad ir Amerikas Savienotās Valstīs, tā palīdzējusi daudziem, kas tagad ir Kanādā vai Austrālijā, tā palīdz uzturēt latviešu baznīcas tiem, kas vēl ir Vācijā, uz tās iniciatīvu celti nami vecajiem ļaudīm, kam nav izredžu no Vācijas izceļot, tā gādājusi mācītājus latviešu saujiņām, kas aizklīdušas Venecuelā un citās zemēs.

Bet, saprotams, ka palīdzība latviešiem un citiem DP, ir bijusi tikai daļa tai darbā, kas veikts un kas vēl veicams Luterāņu Pasaules Federācijai un citām organizācijām, kuŗām Dr. Maiklfelders atdeva sava mūža pēdējos gadus.

Dienu pirms nāves viņš Čikāgā uzrunāja Kristīgo lauksaimnieku aizjūŗas palīdzības organizāciju (CROP) pārstāvjus, kas nāk no visu Amerikas kristīgo baznīcu vidus, un dedzīgos vārdos atgādināja viņiem, ka Vācijā un Austrijā vēl joprojām ir 15 miljoni bēgļu, kam palīdzība tikpat vajadzīga kā pirmajos gados pēc kaŗa.

Nākošajās dienās Dr. Maiklfelders bija paredzējis runāt veselā rindā Amerikas luterāņu sanāksmju, lai atgādinātu, ka pasaulē vēl ir pārāk daudz grūtdieņu, lai varētu pieļaut ziedojumu apsikšanu Luterāņu Pasaules Akcijas (Lutheran World Action) cēlajiem mērķiem.

Šos vēstījumus viņam vairs nebija lemts pavēstīt. Dr. Maiklfelderu, par kuŗu draugi teica, ka viņam nekad nav laika atpūsties, Dievs aizsauca mūžīgā atpūtā. Viņš apbedīts savas dzimtās pilsētas smilšājā Ņevašingtonā, Ohaijo, bet viņa celtā Luterāņu Pasaules Federācija pastāv un pastāvēs, lai turpinātu veikt palīdzības darbu par slavu Dievam, par labu cilvēkiem.

MĀCITĀJS E. ĶIPLOKS

LUTERISKĀ BAZNĪCA AMERIKĀ

V. DARBĪBAS PRAKSE.

JEPAZĪŠANOS ar Amerikas luterisko baznīcu noslēgsim ar skatu tās darbības izpausmēs. Ir liela starpība šai ziņā starp Eiropu un Ameriku. Pēdējā ir zeme, kur ikviens individs ir pastāvīgā sacensībā ar citiem. Dari ātrāk, sasniedz vairāk! Kas stāv uz vietas, iet atpakaļ! Šis temps ir pārnests arī baznīcā. Tā nav mierīga apceres un pārdomu vieta, templis, kāda tā ir Eiropā, kur sludināto Dieva vārdu katrs atsevišķais cilvēks pārdzīvo un īsteno savā uztverē. Amerikas baznīca ir cīnītāja par kristīgu dzīves kārtību, kristīgo karavīru armijas stābs, kas nedod problēmas, bet gatavas pavēles. Sakarā ar to viņas darbības izpausmes ir bagātākas, plašākas, racionālākas, kaut arī tajās, šķiet, neparādās dziļāka uztvere, personīgas atziņas. Saprotams, plašās territorijas un daudzo luterāņu nogrupējumu dēļ, darbības izpausmes visur nav pilnīgi vienādas. Bet metodes aizvien vairāk unificējas. Tā pamazām rodas luterāņu baznīcas normāltips. Tas ir ļoti svarīgi, lai nākotnē varētu rasties viena apvienota luterāņu baznīca Savienotajās Valstīs.

DR. MAIKLFELDERS (pa labi) SARUNĀ AR DR. H. HONGU.

Viens no plašākiem Amerikas baznīcu darbības nozarojumiem ir jaunatnes reliģiskā audzināšana un tuvināšana baznīcai. Amerikas tautskolās nav reliģijas mācības. Par to jāgādā baznīcai pašai. Ideāls atrisinājums būtu dibināt konfesionālās skolas. Diemžēl, luteriskas "draudzes skolas" (parochial schools) ir atvērtas tikai dažās vietās. Te sevišķi izceļami Misuri sinodes pūliņi, kas šai ziņā izrādījusi lielu interesi. Lielāko tiesu tomēr izpalīdzas ar svētdienas skolām, kuŗās mācības notiek pirms vai pēc dievkalpojuma vai arī pa tā laiku baznīcas blakus telpās.

Svētdienas skolu panākumi lielā mērā atkarīgi no telpām un skolotājiem. Pēdējie komplektējas no draudzes locekļiem. Ceļot jaunas baznīcas, ja vien līdzekļi atļauj, svētdienas skolas vajadzībām paredz pietiekami daudz atsevišķu telpju, lai šis darbs varētu notikt bez traucējumiem. Lielāko tiesu svētdienas skolām tomēr jāsamierinās ar vienu lielāku telpu, kas provizoriski sadalīta atsevišķām svētdienas skolnieku grupām (klasēm). Skolnieku uzmanība, bez šaubām, te nevar būt pietiekama. Cik man nācies novērot, tad arī brīvprātīgo skolotāju spējas ir ļoti dažādas. Viņu zināšanas un interesi cenšas vairot ar konferencēm, sanāksmēm, kursiem un vasaras nometnēm, bet darbu klasē atvieglināt ar īpašām rokas grāmatām, kur iztirzāta attiecīgā viela un sniegta arī papildviela. Metodiskos trūkumus svētdienas skolā lielā mērā aizpilda bagātīgie palīglīdzekļi - filmas, diapozitīvi, attēli, kartes, skaņu plates un labi sagatavotie tiešie mācības līdzekļi - grāmatas, darba burtnīcas, izkrāsojamās grāmatas un izgriežamo zīmējumu lapas ar reliģiskiem motīviem, arī svētdienas skolnieku laikraksti. Mācības atdzīvina ar rotaļām un uzvedumiem. Tomēr jāatzīst, ka ar visu to, reliģijas mācību svētdienas skolās pasniedz daudz abstraktāk nekā mūsu tautskolās.

Bērni svētdienas skolu apmeklē kārtīgi. Tas ir tiklab vecāku kā arī pašas skolas nopelns, kas reģistrē ierašanos, pieprasa attaisnojumu par iztrūkšanu un izsniedz liecības par sekmēm. Svētdienas skola ir kļuvusi par amerikāņu dzīves sastāvdaļu. Tai pieder lielais nopelns, ka bērni jau laikus tiek radināti kārtīgi nākt uz baznīcu.

Bez parastās svētdienas skolas ir vēl brīvlaika vai vasaras svētdienas skolas, kas ilgst dažas nedēļas vai arī turpinās visu vasaru. Vasarās svētdienas skolniekus pulcina Bībeles nometnēs, kur sporta nodarbības un rotaļas mijas ar Bībeles studijām un nometņu dziesmām, kam arī ir garīga nokrāsa.

Parallēli svētdienas skolām jaunatni, baznīcai tuvina dažādās jaunatnes organizācijas draudzes paspārnē, piem. skauti un Lutera resp. Valtera ligas (atbilst mūsu jaunatnes pulciņiem).

Konfesionālās vidusskolas (parasti sauktas par akadēmijām) ir tikpat maz izplatītas kā draudzes skolas, toties baznīcas var lepoties ar labi nostādītām augstākām mācības iestādēm - kolledžām. Te savu augstāko izglītību iesākuši vai nobeiguši vairums luterāņu jauniešu. Tās izrādījušās par sevišķi labvēlīgu faktoru baznīcas dzīvē. No kolledžu absolventiem nāk lielākā daļa draudžu darbinieku un svētdienas skolotāju.

OSVALDS GULBIS

BĒRTULA NETAISNĪBA

ZIEMSVĒTKU LEGENDA

BĒRTULIS nebija nekāds stiprinieks. Kalsens, pasīka auguma, allaž domīgs klusētājs - tādiem spēka vīriem kā Kreilim vai paša miesīgajam brālim Alfejam Bērtulis nebija pretinieks. Kad, salaiduši ganāmpulkus kopā, gani sakrita plecos, vēlēdamies varbūt vairāk pieveikt savu vienmuļo dienu, kā savu pretinieku, tad ar Bērtuli tīri viegli tika galā pat Kleopa un Tadejs, kuŗi dienās gan teicās noguldīt arī spēka vīrus Kreili un Alfeju, bet tā diena vēl nebija sagaidīta. Dūšīgie vārdi allaž tika teikti, stiprākajā pretiniekā raugoties caur pieri un smiltis no drēbēm purinot. Uz Bērtuli caur pieri skatīties nebija vajadzības.

Nevarēja arī teikt, ka sirds būtu Bērtulim ļauna. Ilgu laiku netikvien Betlemē, arī Sichemā - un Betlemē būdams, Sichemu ar roku vis neaizsniegsi - gani prātoja: kuŗu toreiz Bērtulis īsti esot izglābis - Kreiļa jēru, vai pašu Kreili? Notikums jau nemaz nebija tik neparasts: no ganāmpulka atklīdis jērs bija iekritis aizā. Tas var katram gadīties. Toreiz tā bija gadījies Kreilim, kas, protams, tūlīt bija steidzies savu īpašumu glābt: ar aci redzi - aiza nav dziļa. Bet kā tiksi klāt? Noliecies uz vēdera - bet ar roku aizsniegt nevar. Mēģināsi rāpties lejup - skaties, ka tik neiekrīti pats. Mala nav diezgan stingra. Un ja arī noraptos, jērs būs apbērts, glābēja vairs nevajadzēs. Pa tam jērs blauj blaujamo. Ko Kreilim darīt? Jēru izglābt viņš nevar. Pamest to liktenim viņš arī nevar. Spēka vīrs aizspiež ausis un stāv aizas malā kā sāls stabs. Tad pieskrien Bērtulis, pārlec aizu, nolaižas pa otru malu aizā, uznes jēru un ieliek to Kreiļa rokās: Še, turpmāk glabā labāk! - Vai tādam var būt ļauna sirds?

Taču Bērtuļa sirdi īsti pazina tikai tie, kas zināja, kā Bērtulis rūpējās par savu brāli Alfeju. Ar Alfeja acīm jau sen nebija labi. Bet kad gaišā dienas laikā, saulītei izlienot no mākoņiem, Alfejs jautāja, vai mēness esot uzlēcis, gani saskatījās. Vai tiešām? Jā, Alfejs bija akls. Un nu jau otro ziemu Bērtulis viņu ģērba un vadāja, mierināja un labināja kā māte slimu bērnu.

Nē, pret Bērtuļa sirdi un spēku Kleopam ar Tadeju iebildumu nebija. Bērtuļa spēks nevarēja kaitēt, un viņa sirds - kas zina? - varēja kādreiz noderēt. Nelaime bija tikai tā, ka Bērtulim vienmēr bija taisnība. Saki, ko sacīdams, dari, ko darīdams, Bērtulis zin labāk un Bērtulim taisnība. Sapņosi, ka esi sakalts važās, cietumā iemests un bendes cirvis jau pacelts pār tavu galvu. Uztrūcies modināsi biedru: Sak, ko tas varētu nozīmēt? Te arī Bērtulis pacels galvu: Draugs, tas nozīmē, ka tu vakar esi nogaršojis jaunās vīģes. Edamas tās būs tikai jaunnedēļ. Un Bērtulim taisnība: vīģes tiešām vēl nebija gatavas. Samulsumu slēpdams, jautāsi: Vai tad tu, Bērtul, nemaz nesapņo? Bērtulis pagrozīs galvu: Nē. Nakts ir gulēšanai. - Citreiz tu, garšļaukus izlaidies un rokas aiz pakauša salicis, skaties zilās debesīs un jūsmo: Kas par skaistu laiciņu! Bet neesi vēl to lāga izteicis, kad jau nožēlo: Bērtulis, lūk, arī skatās debesīs. Būs lietus, viņš saka. Un tiešām, nav vēl saule nogājusi, kad apmācas un lietus klāt. Bērtulim atkal taisnība. Dažreiz tas kļūst vienkārši neizturami. Tovakar neizturēja Tadejs.

Visu dienu bija līņājis, un kad, krēslai metoties, Tadejs nopūlējās sakurt ugunskuru, uguns negribēja degt. Bērtulis skatījās, skatījās, tad pabīdīja Tadeju nost un teica: Tā jau tu neiekursi. Atļauj man! Šie pāris vārdi un draudzīgais rokas pieskāriens likās bija nosaukuši uguni no debesīm. Ugunskurs, zināms, nebija iededzies, bet kūrējs gan. Nosviedis siena vīkšķi un, iespiedis rokas sānos, Tadejs elsa:

"Vai zini ko, Bērtuli? Darīsim tā, kā Ābrāms un Lats. Ej tu pa labi, mēs ar Kleopu iesim pa kreisi."

"Neiet," Bērtulis sacīja gluži mierīgi. "Viens es nevarēšu noganīt."

"Nav mana daļa," atcirta Tadejs. "Tavs ganāmpulks, gani kā zini."

"Tas nav taisnība, Tadej," tikpat mierīgi turpināja Bērtulis. "Tas nav m a n s. Tas ir mans un m a n a b r ā ļ a ganāmpulks. Alfejs man vairs palīdzēt nevar. Tad taču jāpalīdz jums. Mani draugi jūs varbūt neesat. Man jums arī nav jāpalīdz. Bet jūs taču esat Alfeja draugi. Vai viņam jūs negribat palīdzēt?"

Nekā darīt. Alfejam gribējās palīdzēt, kaut arī redzi zaudējis, draugs bija kļuvis īgns un drūms, un tāds tas viņiem nemaz nepatika. Vai nu tāpēc vajadzētu nokārt galvu, viņi sprieda, kad ieraudzīja savu draugu, kas, cilvēkus vairīdamies, tik tālu aizvilcies, ka, pēc viņa domām, neviens to vairs nevarētu redzēt, galvu nodūris un muguru atspiedis pret akmeni vai koku, sēdēja - vai saule, vai lietus. Aiznesa viņam ēdienu, kamēr vien juta atnesēju savā tuvumā - neaizkāra. Izlūdzās brālis, izlūdzās draugi: Alfej, brālīt, vismaz pa nakti nāc pie ugunskura, te tevi vēl zvēri saplosīs. Parastā atbilde bija: Lieciet mani mierā! Velti Tadejs ar Kleopu bija izrunājušies arī šovakar. Zvēri saplosīs? Lai saplosa. Būs vieglāk ir man, ir jums...

Ietinusi zvaigznes biezos mākoņos, salijusī nakts spiedās pie ganu ugunskura. Te taču vēl gaisma un siltums! Ganiem tā nelikās. Nakts viņus vairāk saldēja, kā uguns sildīja. Uguns bija vārga, kā jau uz dzišanu un nakts tāda, ka negribas ne kustēt.

"Briesmīgi vajaga būt ganja tāda, kā šī nakts, Alfejam ir katra diena," domā Kleopa un jūt, ka pamazām gar muguru lien drebuļi. "Kaut vai būtu tikdaudz gaišuma kā ugunskurs!" - Drebuļus jūt arī Ta-

dejs, bet viņš tos nokrata kā odzi, kas, pie ugunskura sasilusi, palīdusi zem izdilušā mēteļa. Tadejam ir cita doma: Kāpēc gan Bērtulim vienmēr taisnība? Un vai tādiem Bērtuļiem būs vienmēr taisnība? Pasakas, viņi saka, esot tikai bērniem, sapņus viņi nesapņo. Nav laikam viegli arī tādiem Bērtuļiem. Tomēr drusku vajadzētu pakaitināt. Tadejs zina, kas tādiem vīriem nepatīk.

"Ko tu teiktu, Kleopa," Tadejs saka - Kleopa, bet domā Bērtuli -, "ko tu teiktu, Kleopa, ja ķēniņš mūs šovakar ielūgtu pie sevis pilī?"

"Nu, ko tad tur?" jautā uzrunātais iztrūcies.

"Nu, gaisma, tūkstoš sveces tūkstoš lukturos, mūzika, kokles un stabules. Būtu jauki, vai nē?"

"Un tu - ietu?"

"Ha, kāpēc nē?"

"Bet kā tad tā? Kas tad paliks pie ganāmpulka?"

"Nu, Bērtulis. Tas jau nenāktu."

Bērtulis savelk pieri, grib ko teikt, bet atmet ar roku: tukša runāšana.

"Jā, es ietu," atkārto Tadejs, Bērtuļa ierunu nesagaidījis. "Es ietu. Un kad es sēdētu ar ķēniņu pie galda, es sacītu: Ķēniņ, tev ir zelts un sudrabs un dārgi akmeņi. Tev ir pils un tūkstoš sveces! Tu pamāj ar vienu roku, un vienu esi paaugstinājis. Tu pamāj ar otru - un citu esi pazudinājis. Mums ir draugs, Alfejs, Bērtuļa brālis. Labs gans. Spēcīgs kā lauva. Bet viņš vairs neredz, vairās cilvēku, un tagad ir viens tumšā naktī laukā. Viņu saplosīs zvēri. Ķēniņ, ļauj viņam sēdēt uz tavas pils kāpnēm! Tavu sveču mirdzu viņš neredzēs, bet tavu mūziķu kokles un stabules viņš dzirdēs. Viņš sēdēs pašā maliņā un tavus viesus netraucēs. - Labi, sacīs ķēniņš, lai viņš nāk. - Bet man ir vēl viens lūgums, es sacītu. Ķēniņ, tu jau visu zini. Tu būsi dzirdējis arī par Sīmaņa atraitni. Viena sieviete ar pieciem bērniem. Mazākajam vēl nav ne trīs gadu. Šodien viņu izlika no mājas. Kur nabaga atraitne lai iet? Smagu darbu viņa strādāt nevarēs. Vai tu viņai nedotu kādu vieglāku darbu savā virtuvē?"

Bērtulis vairs tālāk neklausās. Viņam ir auksti, tik auksti kā vēl nekad. Viņš uzmet ugunskuram zāļu sauju, uguns nozib pār sagūlušā ganāmpulka mugurām, bet Bērtulim siltāk netop. Tieši tas jau ir tas, par ko viņš allaž domā! Tur ir akli, veci, vientuļi, spitālīgi - kā gribētos tiem palīdzēt! Bet kā? Kas palīdzēs? Ķēniņš? Vai ķēniņš var atdot acu gaismu brālim? Vai ķēniņš būs tas, kas uzņems savā pilī Sīmaņa atraitni? Ķēniņa kalpi taču atraitni izlika! Var jau būt, ka ķēniņš to nezina. Bet kas lai viņam teiktu? Tadejs? - Ek, vienmēr būs, kā bijis: zemais būs zems, augstais būs augsts, stiprais samīs vājo... Noguris Bērtulis paraugās naktī. Betlēmiešu logos vairs tikai retas ugunis. Vēls. Ļaudis devušies pie miera.

Bērtulis nožāvājas un, it kā to tikai gaidījis, miegs klāt. Bet miegam līdz - sapnis. Sapnis paskatās uz Bērtuli, pasmaida un jautā: Vai tu mani pazīsti? Nē, saka Bērtulis. Neesmu nekad redzējis. Nu tad skaties labi, saka sapnis. Nav daudz tādu, kas mani redz. Nu, ko tu redzi? - Pagaidi, pagaidi! sauc Bērtulis. Kur tu mani ved, vai tas ir tirgus? - Bērtulim liekas - viņš esot tirgū. Visi spiežas vienuviet. Bērtulis ar'. Ko tad te pārdod? viņš jautā salīkušai vecenītei. - Visu, dēliņ, visu - jaunību vecajam, veselus locekļus tizlajam, dzirdīgas ausis kurlajam, redzīgas acis aklajam. Nopērc tik zariņu, tad būs. Cik tad maksā? jautā Bērtulis, pirkstgalos celdamies. Nav dārgi, saka sieviņa. Tūkstots dālderu. Tūkstots dālderu? ! jautā Bērtulis izbijies. Kur man pie tādas naudas tikt! Muļķīti, pamāca sieviņa, tās jau asaras! Vai neredzi, tās mantas pat bērnam gana. - Ļaudis tā kā pašķiras. Bērtulis jūt, ka ir piestumts Pārdevējam, bet viņš nevar uz to paskatīties. Viņš tikai redz: kāds bērns izstiepis abas roķeles pilnas sudraba dālderiem. Nu, ko tu gribi, mazais? jautā Pārdevējs, mazās roķeles savējās saņemdams. Mans Dievs, Bērtulis tikko novaldās skaļi neiesaukdamies: tas taču Sīmanietes mazākais! - Maizīti, saka bērns. Nu, ņem vienu zariņu, saka Pārdevējs un pieliec savu galvu. Galvā viņam - ērkšķu vainags. Bērtulis nezina, kas notiek tālāk ar bērnu. Viņš tikai dzird, ka Pārdevējs jautā: Un tev? - Man? atkārto Bērtulis. Man nekā nevajaga, manam brālim...

"Bērtuli, Bērtuli!" kāds purina viņa plecu. "Acumirkli, acumirkli!" domās saka Bērtulis, "es tūlīt..." un sniedzas pēc zariņa ērkšķu vainagā.

"Bērtuli, vai tu guli?" modinātāja balss jautā. Nav vairs ne Pārdevēja, ne pircēju. Vajadzētu pacelt plakstus. Divi vīri nezin vai paceltu. Bērtulim tie jāceļ pašam. Taču beidzot acis ir atvērtas.

"Bērtuli, vai tu ar' redzēji?" Tas ir Kleopa, kas jautā.

"Ko, ko tad?" ar mokām izdabū Bērtulis. Tad viņš atceras savu sapni, skumji pasmaida un pamāj ar galvu. "Jā, sapni."

"Nē, nē, vai tu neredzēji, vai tu nedzirdēji...?"

"Vai tu neredzēji eņģeli?" Tadejs nāk Kleopam palīgā.

"Ne," saka Bērtulis izbrīnījies. "Vai tas bija eņģelis? Tas jau bija Pārdevējs."

"Nē, nē eņģelis!" sauc Kleopa un Tadejs viens caur otru.

"Dievs, Kungs!" beidzot sāk stāstīt Kleopa. "Es savu mūžu neaizmirsīšu: tik gaišs kā dienā un eņģelis stāv, lūk, tur, kur tas akmens. Es trīcēju kā apses lapa. Savu vārdu nebūtu izrunājis, ja prasītu."

"Man likās, es mirstu," iekrīt starpā Tadejs. "Bet eņģelis saka: Nebīstieties. Jums šodien Pestītājs dzimis."

"Pestītājs?" pēkšņi jautā Bērtulis, pietrūkdamies kājās. "Tu saki - Pestītājs? Kur?"

Kleopa pagriežas uz Betlemes pusi. "Tur. Man vēl tagad skan ausīs eņģeļa vārdi: Nebīstieties, es jums pasludinu lielu prieku, kas visiem ļaudīm notiks: jo jums šodien Pestītājs dzimis, tas ir Kristus, tas Kungs, Dāvīda pilsētā. Un to ņemieties par zīmi: jūs atradīsiet bērnu autos ietītu... jūs atradīsiet... Tadej, kā bija tālāk?"

"Jūs atradīsiet bērnu autiņos ietītu un silē gulošu," nobeidz Tadejs.

"Silē?" jautā Bērtulis vīlies. "Vai tu pareizi dzirdēji - s i l ē?"

"Jā," Tadejam piebalso Kleopa. "Silē."

Ne vārda neteicis, Bērtulis apsēžas. Uguns ir izdzisusi. Kvēl vēl tikai pāris oglītes. V i s s ir izdzisis.

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''Nāc, nāc taču!'' sauc Kleopa un purina Bērtuļa plecu. ''Vai tu atkal gribi gulēt? ''

''Es neguļu,'' saka Bērtulis. ''Bet nav jau nozīmes. Tas taču ir bijis tikai sapnis. Pestītājs taču nebūs silē. Pestītājs ir liels un augsts. Dieva svaidītais, ķēniņu ķēniņš.''

''Neticami,'' saka Tadejs, apsēdies un galvu šūpodams. ''Bērtuli, nevar būt, ka tev arī šoreiz taisnība! Tas nebija sapnis. Es nebiju aizmidzis. Es pats ar savām acīm redzēju. Lūk, tur...''

Jā, kas tur ir? Pusvārdā apklusis, stāstītājs stīvi blenž tumsā. Liekas - kāds nāk. Tadejs ar Kleopu saskatās. Vai bēgt? Vai tvert rungu? Vai zvērs?

''Kas tur nāk? '' jautā Bērtulis. Bet arī viņam balss mazliet dreb. ''Kas tur nāk? '' jautā Bērtulis vēlreiz. ''Atbildi!''

Atbildes nav, bet mēness, mākoņus pašķīris, nomet sidraba tiltu. Pa mēness tiltu nāk Alfejs. Viņš smaida.

''Kur tu ej? Kas ir ar ţevi? '' jautā brālis un draugi. ''Atbildi taču!''

''Es varu atkal redzēt,'' saka Alfejs tik klusi, it kā nerunātu viņš, bet pati nakts. Es varu atkal redzēt! Man liekas, es neesmu vairs virs zemes, bet debesīs. Ak, jūs jau nezinat, ko es redzēju! Es sēdēju un domāju, kāpēc gan man tāds liktenis? Ko esmu noziedzies? Un kāpēc mani Dievs tā sodījis? Tikpat kā dzīvs aprakts! Visapkārt tumšs - kā kapā. Pēkšņi es jūtu - es atkal varu redzēt. Zeme zem manām kājām liekas būtu izzudusi. Es itkā būtu uz ūdens. Ūdens virmo un viz. Austrumi sārtojas. Lec saule. Nē, kāds vīrs baltā tērpā - kur gadījies, kur nē - stāv manā priekšā. Parādība, eņģelis!...''

''Ko viņš sacīja? ''

''Nebīsties, jums šodien Pestītājs dzimis...''

''Tālāk, tālāk! Kā bija tālāk? ''

''Tālāk es vairs neatceros.''

''Vai viņš nesacīja, kur tu viņu vari atrast? ''

''Jā, jā, nu es atceros, - jūs atradīsiet bērnu silē.''

''Silē!'' saka Bērtulis, brāļa roku saķerdams. ''Silē! Nevar būt! Tad jau Tadejam taisnība un tev un Kleopam. Pestītājs silē!''

* * *

''...tad gani runāja savā starpā: eima tad nu uz Betlemi raudzīt, kas noticis, ko tas Kungs mums licis paziņot. Un tie steigdamies nāca un atrada ir Mariju, ir Jāzepu un bērniņu silē gulošu. Bet to redzējuši, tie izpauda to, kas tiem bija sacīts par šo bērnu. Un visi, kas to dzirdēja, izbrīnējās par vārdiem, ko gani tiem bija sacījuši...''

(Lūkas ev. 2,15b-18

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Pastor Osv. Gulbis

CHRIST'S ROSE IS STILL BLOOMING

In those days... So the Christmas story begins. And what kind of days were they? The old Christmas carol is right. They were Winter days, rough, cruel, dark. The almighty Night had expelled the Day, and the Day when leaving had taken the sun with it also. And when the sun was once in a while shining in those days, it was the Winter sun with its cold hands. Those few buds which opened in its hands died soon. The garden through which like a warm breath of spring God once had walked stood bare then. And as the trees in the Winter frostiness are stretching their hands towards the sun and begging for Spring, so in those days begged for spring - that garden that God had planted once - namely the whole mankind.

And behold, it happened in those days that in the farthest corner of that garden there opened a rose on the bough of a thornbush. That is why the old Christmas carol says: "A Branch So Fair Has Blossomed," meaning the Christ's rose. Talking about the same Christ's rose, the Apostle Paul says in his theologian's language: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4,5).

St. Luke says that a multitude of the heavenly host was praising God, the glory of the Lord shone round about a few shepherds, and an angel came down from the heaven when the Christ's rose opened. A man of our days sometimes thinks it has been said too much. No, it is even an understatement. If God really "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (St. John 3:16) - and it is really so - then it has been said but in part. If all they that labor and are heavy laden, if all the half broken and half burning, if all they which hunger after righteousness and which are persecuted had met in one place that night, and if they having knelt had praised God, God would have not been praised enough. If all the starwindows had been openend that night and the angels had looked down through them, if all the trees on earth had budded in that winter night, and if all the flowers on earth had come into bloom, the wonder of the holy night still would not have been praised enough, for "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles..." (1. Tim. 3:16).

But what avails it that there is a rose blooming, if there is none who would enjoy it? What avails it that there is heavenly music, if there is none who would listen to it? What avails it that there is sun, when it shines upon the eyes of a sleeper. The blind one would not see, the deaf one would not hear, and the sleeper does not need the sun.

People slept that night - Herod in his palace, the scribes and Pharisees in Jerusalem and the whole of Bethlehem like a bough of a thornbush under the snow. Nevertheless that was the very place where Christ's rose came into bloom!

It is a sad story what has been told by the evangelist St. John especially when we remember that John is the evangelist of charity and light: "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not... He came unto his own, and his own received him not." In a manger Mary laid her firstborn son, "because there was no room for them in the inn." Having heard about the newborn king, Herod wanted to destroy him, and Joseph and Mary and the babe in swaddling clothes fled from their home...

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God..." (St. John 1, 12). It is a good thing that in those days and in the same country there were men who were keeping watch, men who, surprised by the night, were longing for light, men who even when a blizzard had drifted on all the roads, were tracing Spring. To them even in Winter a rose came into bloom, and in a single rose Spring itself smiled at them, for beyond the present transitoriness they saw the coming glory and in a feeble babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in manger - the King of kings, the Son of God. To them the rose of Christ was blooming. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born... a Savior..." (St. Luke 2).

And what about us? What about our days? It is dark, cold, unpleasant. There are moans and the breath of Death, and the way to Spring and home is blocked up with snow. The mighty ones of this world and all of mankind are asleep as a thornbush under snow. Where are those men in our days who are keeping watch? Would it be asking too much if it would be asked: Shall we be they, if we are not they already? Are we not longing for light and for Springtime, for peace and for good will, for justice and God's Kingdom on earth? Do we not need a Savior? Let us keep watching in our days! Let us believe in Spring's coming. Christ's rose is still blooming. It cannot drive away the world's darkness. It cannot soften this world's pain. The mighty ones of this world push it aside on their windowsills, for they do not want Christ's rose to cover up their sight. Christ's rose fades away in the books of the wise men of this world. Let it bloom in thy heart! The human heart is also a thornbush - sharp, covered with snow. What is a Christian? It is a blossom of a rose on a bough of a thornbush. Let Christ's rose bloom in thy heart, then thou wouldst have light even in darkness, and even if all the roads would be blocked up with snow, in thine heart there would be Spring striking its harp. The thorns would not tear us in pieces and our heart would be full with delight. So just like the old Christmas carol says - so should we say:

"This little Flow'r so fragrant,
My heart fills with delight
For with its shining splendor
It drives away the night.
True man, and yet God's Son,
Saves us from sin and sorrow,
And when life's day is done.

* * *

Provost J. Kullitis

"THE DIVINE GLIMMER OF THE STARS STILL HAS NOT BEEN EXTINGUISHED"
1. John 3:1

Christian brethren, fellow-country-men in U.S.A. and in the wide world!

Since our childhood, Christmas has been our dearest and nicest festival. Our parents made the preparations and we desired it passionately. At last when the long-desired night came, our mother dressed us in our Sunday clothes and brought us into the brightly lighted room, where in the green Christmas tree uncountable candles were shining. And when we were standing there dazzled and confused by the brightness, mother kissed us and said: Our Heavenly Father has provided us with a great joy. He has sent his Son tonight who transforms all of us into God's children. Let us give thanks, for He, the Son of God, is coming also to us and let us sing then receiving Him:

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.

Thereafter mother distributed the gifts that the heavenly babe had brought.

Oh,you dear bright days of childhood! Oh, the sweet and holy child's joy of Christmas! How far it has gone away from us! We can but in spirit return to our father's house in our homeland, where strangers are walking along the paths that we once knew so well. Nevertheless, when the Christmas chimes resound and when we hear the good tidings of Christmas, there is still left a great deal of that warm joy and it stirs up our hearts even now.

Days and years have passed, there have come events in the wide world as well as in our own life, storms and tempests have arisen that have tried to extinguish that Light which is the only one that can warm up our life and our heart.

I will remind you of but one of those events. When Christmas 1940 was near at hand, the communists wanted to forbid its celebration. Finally, however, it was allowed with the remark that it would be the last time, for religion, they said, was men's private affair, and work should not be disturbed. I remember that Christmas as one of the nicest. The godless regime had forbidden the sale of Christmas trees for their cutting, they said, endangered the growth of the forests. Some deacons, however, brought from their private forests the nicest Christmas trees. The Church choir was scattered, for the communist government had announced that the teachers could not remain in parish work as choir directors or organists, for, they said, schools now were separated from the church. But when Christmas approached, the old singers came together again and some new ones joined them, including some students from various schools. They came despite the godless authorities' prohibition. We found a choir director also. He was the retired teacher V., who had had a teacher's and organist's job in the neighbourhood of Bauska some years before. He was willing to take his director's baton again, saying:"I will conduct my last time. The servants of Antichrist can withhold my pension, nevertheless, I won't need it long." When Christmas Eve came, the old church of St. Anna in Jelgava was overcrowded. There were many whose eyes were filled with tears when the church choir, despite the threat of the godless, under the baton of its director introduced the service with the old Christmas carol "Silent Night, Holy Night." The second anthem also was very impressive. It was Prof. J. Vitols' "The Divine Glimmer." When the words, "The divine glimmer of the stars still has not been extinguished" resounded, everybody had the feeling: Thanks be to God! Men cannot extinguish the

glimmering stars and they cannot choke the divine Christmas light either.

The foresight of the faithful teacher came true: he went to his God in the beginning of the coming year. Blessed be his memory, for our Lord's saying concerns him: Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

Christmas 1951 is at hand. The world is parted into two hostile camps. Both are arming rapidly. Atom bombs are exploding on this and on that side. Up to now it is only a test, but they proclaim total destruction. They stir up in the skies dust and smoke that covers the snow. There is already the bloody war in Korea that has taken away some lives of the Latvian youth also, and that war has caused new multitudes of refugees. Will this war-fire extinguish or will it spread out in the coming year; nobody knows. Our homes were wrapped in smoke and fire when we left them, and smoke and fire we still see in front of us. Nevertheless, do not be afraid! The divine glimmer of the stars still has not been extinguished. It is the divine charity that transforms us into God's children. There is much selfishness, anger, and cruelty in this world of today - not only in the realm of Antichrist but also among the Christian nations. Charity, however, will remain victorious at last, and it will be the ruler. We do not proclaim at Christmas human love, which grow cold soon and turns into anger, but God's charity that remains faithful to us, the sinners, up to the end of this world. In Jesus Christ, God has revealed this charity and it belongs to His essence. Without this charity God would not be our dear Heavenly Father. When the selfishness and anger of this world embitter us we know to whom we can go - to Him who said: A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

From love also they will recognize whether one belongs to the Christmas communion or not. To the first Christmas communion the people of Bethlehem did not belong, for in their hard-heartedness they did not accept Mary and Joseph in their homes, but gave them a place in a stable. To the first communion the Pharisees and scribes did not belong either, for they were hypocrites, thinking that they were righteous and did not need a Savior. To it did not belong Herod, for he thought only of how to preserve his might and even made an attempt to destroy the child Jesus. To it did not belong Caesar Augustus for he himself in his richness and abundance of might pretended to be the carrier of the new happy era. To it, however, belonged the simple and poor shepherds, who received the good tidings about the birth of the Savior - in a pure, dear and faithful heart, and they went and searched Him and worshiped Him when they had found Him.

Fire is kindled by fire. May God's love kindle in our hearts love to our Savior whom He has sent and love to our brethren. An American magazine contains an article about a poor boy who lost all his relatives during the terrible war in Korea. He could not smile anymore with an innocent child's joy, but when the Christian brotherly love took care of him, he regained his smile again. How many are the Latvian children whose fathers were killed during the last war and who have but their mother to bring them up! How many are the fathers and mothers who are still living in the camps in Germany! Their sons were also killed in the last war, or lost or out of reach. Let us go and see them and others who are heavy laden at this Christmas, and let us comfort them, showing that they have not been forgotten. Let us do that with a pure lovely and faithful heart, for then we also will belong to that Christmas communion to whom the angel brought the tidings of joy and God's love: Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

I have stood among many in congregations, schools and families at the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve. We are scattered throughout the world now; nevertheless, let us stand under Christ's star, and we shall feel that Christmas light and peace come also to our hearts.

I wish a blessed feast of love to all of you - who love our Lord Jesus Christ in his imperishable glory. (Eph. 6:24). Amen.

* * *

LEONIDS BREIKSS

M Y R E T U R N T O C H R I S T

Sunset considerations

I.
Looking for my way.

It was not easy for me since my early years to go my way and not to know where I was going. It was even harder to live my life and not to know for what I was living.

I really wanted to find out and penetrate for whose glory there were and remained all things both visible and invisible.

And I wanted to know what was the most surpassing in the human life and in the world. Who was it that made us to come here - to be born, to live and to die? And from which sun did we come here before we were born? And where do we go when we are dead?

So I wanted to find signs which would tell me and witness of that.

I have stood at cradles and at graves. I remember how my older sisters passed away. And there was one thing that embarrased me most - where did they go?

There have been many both intimate and remote to me. They passed away and my heart has always asked: where did they go?

So my heart came to this presentiment: beyond this life there is another one. And there is a way by which men pass away.

But where do they go?

Then I listened to what the people said and I heard: they went to God.

And I began to look for signs that would bear witness for God.

And I saw that the whole world was full of those signs.

I really saw it soon: He governs earth and heaven.

When I remember what my mother taught me in my early days, I remember she taught me to say a prayer in the evenings.

I did not quite understand this prayer; I did not understand it for many years.

But there was one thing that I understood: it was done for His glory. It was for Him, who surpasses everything, - men and beasts, the quick and the dead. He surpassed that which I saw and that which I felt.

So I began to learn to glorify Him and to obey Him.

For I thought: if He has sent us to this world we should obey Him.

For we shall stand again before Him when we shall have passed away from this world, like the others did who died in our presence.

*

There is but one question that has worried me above all in my life: what does He want of us? How should we be to please Him? How should we live, what should we do so that His will would be done?

For that I have understood: we are sent here to accomplish His will.

For many years I have asked in my heart what was His will.

For many years I have looked for the right way.

I attended several schools. I saw: both the high and the commons.

But none of them could show me the way to Him.

And if there were any who knew and showed me, I could not see it.

(To be continued)

* * *

Prof. K. Kundzins

ON EARTH OR IN HEAVEN?
What Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God.

When reading the gospels we all have the clear feeling that Jesus Christ - wheresoever he taught, invited, comforted and helped - always faced a great ideal of perfection, a bright vision about the life that was entirely different from the present earthly life with its false goals and disappointments, iniquities and cruelties. This revelation of perfection he received from his heavenly Father (cf. Mt. 11:25; Lk. 10:21). Its content he usually expressed by these words: The Kingdom of God (or Heaven).

It was a particular world which can also be called the "super-world". He lived and breathed in it. He brought it into himself and it made him happy, (cf. The introductory words of Lk. 10:21).

Its beauty, however, he did not keep for himself alone. He tried to visualize it also before the eyes of his audience and followers. His heart rejoiced when it was revealed to him that the rest of the children on earth also - especially those pure

in a childlike heart, the humble, the suffering ones, the pushed aside and the persecuted - - that all they were not excluded from this blessedness inasmuch as they were longing for God and the perfection of his love. Cf. the introduction of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the so-called Beatitudes. Mt. 5:1 ff.

This far, it seems, all Bible readers will have the same insight of Jesus' teachings. However, we know by experience that the following question arouses to the modern man of a very realistic point of view: where shall we expect the realization or accomplishment of this Kingdom of God according to Jesus' teachings: on earth, in a better (in a true "brotherly") fellowship of individuals and nations (in a more righteous regulation of our life) or in an entirely different sphere of life - as it, for instance, has been expressed in these words of a hymn: "If my soul, thou wilt this find do not search for it on earth. If thou want this treasure, search for it on yonder side."

There can be but one answer. The whole activity of Jesus, even where he helped in worldly disaster, in its deepest essence and the last intention was devoted to the psychical impetus. Let us remember but the story about the healing of the ten lepers, Lk. 17:11-18, where the concluding words of Jesus show it clearly, or the discussion with his disciples after the nourishment of the five thousand men, Mk. 8:14-21. This psychical impetus or better to say - the impetus of the "eternal life" (the genesis and growth of the spiritual man) has been emphasized especially by the gospel of John in such stories as for example the discourses with Nocodemus (3rd chapter), with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (4th chapter), etc. Obviously the content of God's or the Heavenly Kingdom according to Jesus' teachings is essentially different from the so-called "earthly things". German theology has made a significant term for this content - "das ganz Andere" (R. Otto, K. Barth). So many sayings of Jesus point out the unusual, uncommon, irrational character of the Kingdom of God. We have to consider but the fact that Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God or Heaven generally in parables. He compared it with "a treasure hidden in a field" or with a marvelous pearl of immense value, but the hardly noticable beginning of God's Kingdom - with a tiny seed sown in the soil. The decisive significance in this respect was Jesus saying that the Kingdom of God already exists but hidden, in "mystery" (Mk. 4:11), not yet in "power" and "glory" (Mk. 9:1). Here should be remembered also the very well known words of Jesus in St. John's gospel (18:36): "My Kingdom is not of this world."

Is it said by that, that the realism of this worldly life was entirely strange for Jesus and that he had no interest in earthly things, for instance, how to avert the deficiencies of real life and how to overcome its wickedness? This would be a very overhasty judgment. He surely summons us not only to teach and preach but also to heal the sick ones and to help those who have "fallen among thieves". Over and over again he suffered with the people who were in misery and helped them. He called his disciples to give to drink "one of these little ones," a cup of cold water if they are thirsty (Mt. 10:52) and as the standard for the Christian life he set the works of mercy at those who have a rough time (poor ones) (Mt. 25:34 ff.). Taking into account all those things, we have a right to ask "Does not the Kingdom of God within those works of charity and welfare realize itself already here on earth at least partly?"

Exactly: these are already the "signs" of the coming Kingdom of God (cf. Mt. 11:5). Here the marvelous content of God's Kingdom has started to become real although only "in some respect" and "partly". Jesus himself rejoices greatly when a beam from the superworld, to which he has given the name God's Kingdom, already falls into the darkness of this earthly life. When God has given a moment of revelation to some one, when a soul

which was oppressed by dark powers (evil spirits) has been liberated, when a sinner revives and in repentance receives forgiveness and strength for a new start, all these events are "bright beams" or symptoms, witnessing that the Kingdom of God is "near at hand", that its gates already open and that its light shines (cf. Mt. 12:28; Lk. 23:42, 43). The gates really open, the light really shines. But is it in full completeness, power and glory? Certainly not. It happens only partly, in smallness.

Jesus is too great a realist and too far-seeing at the same time for to teach that in between the frames of the earthly life the whole completeness of the Kingdom of God could realize itself. Even the greatest external prosperity on earth, the most perfect political, social or other regime in itself cannot be the accomplishment of God's great aims (Mk. 8:36; 10:42-44; 12,17). In the best case they can be but symptoms showing that people in their efforts are on their way to the Kingdom of God, that their hearts are longing for it and that they with all their hearts want to help their brothers. There is no doubt that God has given to many of His people special gifts and a particular task for laboring in the social field: to help those who are in misery, to struggle against diseases, to heal the sick ones, to improve life conditions for the poor ones. Jesus himself inspired by divine charity, started those works. He also had considered marriage and the family as God's holy institutions. He has been sorrowful when these sanctuaries were not respected; there is no doubt also about his wish that the relations of the wider society and the social life of nations should be settled in a brotherly spirit of family's likeness. The shedding of innocent blood and violence are a disgust in the eyes of His heavenly Father (Mt. 23:35). Men some day will have to answer for that. Jesus, as far as we know, did not repeat the words of Isaiah and Micah about an era when the war weapons will be destroyed and remodeled into ploughshares and sickles, but these words, it seems would very nicely fit into his teachings.

Nevertheless, if all these aims would be reached on earth - there is no place where Jesus would have said that they will be reached - God's Kingdom still would not have become reality. Even if a great deal indeed would be reached, mankind would be but "on its way" towards it (the Kingdom of God). The earthly things and the earthly creatures will remain what they are forever, namely created things subjected to sufferings, to sin and to the power of transitoriness. The high goal of perfection of God's Kingdom surpasses all that. It is in a different sphere. It can become a reality only then when that great change will have happened about which apostle Paul (1. Cor. 15:50 and 54) and the Book of Revelation (21:4-5) talk most clearly, namely when the former things will have passed away and everything will have become new. The gospels witness that Jesus had the same point of view (Mk. 12:25)."The eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepeared for them that love Him."

* * *

A. Prieditis

INTELLECT AND FAITH

IV.

In conclusion I would like to point out the negative outcome which might occur when intellect has been overvalued and adored, or when intellect has been neglected. In the limits of its abilities intellect stands its test completely.

It is successful in serving the powers of the soul, which surpass it. However, we must not expect from our intellect the accomplishment of tasks to which it is not fit at all, nor, seeing that it cannot be done, must we forsake our intellect completely as useless. Unfortunately that is exactly what mankind has done in the course of its history. It has shifted from one extreme to the other, from one catastrophe to another. What happens in our days?

Vinet says in one of his books: "The modern idolatry has two altars. Upon the one they sacrifice to matter, upon the other one - to intellect. Upon both altars human blood is shed."

Although a hundred years have already passed since these words were spoken, they still are true. For many centuries there has existed the tendency to overvalue the role of our intellect. The rapid progress of the rationalistic science goes hand in hand with the collapse of moral discipline. Even the church feels pushed back into defense. Yet, I do not think that the church is wise when, defending itself, it makes the attempt at rationalizing itself and building up some sort of rational theology. Nothing else but the irrational element gives strength to aggressive atheism. Hans Barth, reviewing the historic development of the Marxistic ideology says in his book "Wahrheit und Ideologie": according to the teachings of Marx no one but he who can see things from the viewpoint of the proletariat can understand the Marxistic dialectics. Only when by the help of an act of faith and will the identification with the proletarian viewpoint has occurred, we might try to understand and use dialectics as the explanatory principle for nature and history.

Talking about the tragicalness of this time the Swiss philosopher Denis de Rougemont says in his book "La part du diable": "The explosion of irrationalism in our century shows where to the madness of raticnalism leads when it starts destroying religion and oppressing religious emotions. Having opposed and exterminated the outmoded religious customs, it has in the same methodical way prevented the birth of new religious customs (sacrifices, religious feasts, fastings, moral and mystical disciplines, prayers and rituals)."

Then there is no wonder that the oppressed irrational element breaks all the artifical dams and causes destructive catastophes, mass psychoses and neuroses, nazism, communism and similar movements. (Let us not forget what a role processions, parades, demonstrations, slogans, anthems, mass suggestion, the red "corners", "icons" - i.e., portraits of the leaders, - the trust in leaders and in their infallibility, etc., have in all those movements). Neither is there wonder that on the other hand men have been fascinated by stupid superstitions and dark thaumaturgies. The more the intellectuals will incriminate in these phenomena the religious "instincts" and the longer they will lament for the perishing of the critical mind, the sooner they will witness new destructive catastrophes.

These powers can never be successfully oppressed. They should be directed into channels where they would become constructive and where they do not need to live on suppositions, but on truths, which are eternal.

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M E R R Y C H R I S T M A S

and a Happy New Year to our old and young readers and to our self-denying co-workers.

Might the Christmas angel bring the good tidings to all who, longing for peace,

comfort and light, are vigilant also in the darkness of our time: Unto you is born a Savior! Might the Christmas present of the Almighty God - The Savior Christ - with this Christmas issue enter your homes to comfort the sad, strengthen the weary, and put His hands upon the lonely. Christ is our hope here and eternally. Might his star that appeared in the Holy Night guide you in all your paths throughout the coming year. Might Lord God protect you from all evil.

"Majas Draugs"
The Publishers and
Editors.

* * *

M. ROZENTALE

SOME CHAOTIC MARKS IN OUR EXILE'S LYRICS

No one can deny that the 20th century, especially in the last years, has not carried with it great contradictions, the solution of which is not yet perceivable; and no one can deny that there are not many absurdities which we are still not able to avert. But it is wrong to be of the conviction that contradictions and absurdities are the curse only of our era, or that they are its only characteristic sign. There have not been lasting eras of harmony in the history of mankind, but yet there is the harmonious poetry of all those times, which has outlasted ages. Reading these works we feel the spirit of the personality which has made them.

Some of the authors of our exile's lyrics imagine that they are announcing a new course when they express their era and themselves. This has been done by the poets of all times, but how it is done is the important thing. Significant is the base upon which the poet stands, observing his era. It must be stated that some of our exile's lyricists do not have a firm point of view of their own, whereof they observe the world, but they are tied in the absurd cords of the era and area not able to free themselves, in order to create something better and nicer.

Velta Snikere says - "To tremble in this dissonance until the end." Yet she has also in view some brighter picture of the future, when she says further -

"Before silvery will splash the new morning,
This dissonance must roar until its end."

Of course, there could be the talk only about the dissonance of this era, because the new era will come with a new dissonance, as it has been and will be. But Dzintars Sodums already feels this era like a heaviness from which he escapes into the intoxication of senses -

"We are born for this era;
We must carry out this era heavily.
Do you feel it? And I bending down
Kiss your knees." (The Time of the End)

In the utmost confusion with the time and himself has come O. Jegens -

"In your conscience of the distress experienced
It is mixed up - what is damned and what is holy,
And your mouth throws words of scorn and evil."
(The Emigrant)

That is a sinking into the absurdities of one's era, taking delight in the inclination to emphasize the ugly. Walking further on this road, one arrives at the humiliation of centuries old holiness, which bounds with the degrading of the values of a man.

These poets who still look upon the problems of life so superficially have given in their poems also a very frank characterization of themselves, yet it is possible that sometimes those are only poses. The life without an aim, without a duty V. Snikere shows in the poem "I live":

"I live,
And grabbing by the mane
The skittish wind, I proceed along far
And forget what remains on the side road
And don't remember the former times."

The tragical discord with himself shows the poem of Ojars Jegens "The date":

"My thoughts are just like tousled thread,
And loathsome and strange I always seem to myself."

The same is expressed in the poem "Self-portrait (1945)" by Dz. Sodums:

"Who, just as gibberish is in his poems
As profound and expressionless in his face,
Born tiny, you will die like a dirty trifle."

It is an old perception that man is tiny in cosmos, but there is a new one here - that he is "a dirty trifle." So far these authors stand away from the true understanding of man's essence. They are viewing this era with a nearsighted look, measuring everything with experienced absurdity. And being well aware of this absurdity (Dz. Sodums "Someone Is Speaking"), yet they find it worthy to write poems about. Developing into further consequences of these thoughts, one can arrive at the philosophy of life which will make the man crawl, not rise, and be closer to the animal from which he has wanted for centuries to withdraw in his developing and rising. It is not incidental that these poets do not see a spiritual guidance, the spirit, and that they feel in their lives only the most primitive views of human beings. Dz. Sodums heighten man to God -

"It seems to me, oh woman,
You beautiful and great,
Like the goddess to me you will be."

The second time God is mentioned in the poem "The Spring of an Emigrant" and is written with a small letter:

"Through the first jet of the fountain
The bronze lovers are looking at each other, created by
The artist as faulty as god."

O. Jegens writes the Savior ("The Melancholy") and the Almighty Ruler with the small letter.

"Oh, you ruler almighty, let me
Not depart already prematurely."
(The Mother)

Elsewhere, though, the capital letter has been used in the poems "The Bride of the Soldier", "The Mother" and "To the Artist". Those lines sound tragically where authors

at the same time degrade God as well as man. Dz. Sodums:

"Why was it allowed to you, you kneader of clay,
To give the strong spirit to him who has too much madness?
Thus, vagabond, you walk like the half-spit of God."
(Self-portrait)

If one estimates oneself that low, what could one form out of himself, what use has the whole life then? Then the fall is so low that it is hard to hope for the rise. Still uglier comparison we find in the sonnet of Ojars Jegens "The Wounded", where there has been used such a vulgar and ugly phrase, that it cannot be repeated here. Could it be that the phrase has appeared so "strong" only because that correspondent word was needed for the rhyme? Or is this indeed the conviction of the poet, that the man is nothing more than the dirt? Why should poetry exist at all then, when all there is left to do is to absurdly perish in absurdity. One should have more self-control, so as not to bring into poetry such phrases which later on one will be ashamed to recognize as one's own. We shall presume that the mentioned authors will sometime come out of their muddle of thoughts. We shall assume that these are only transitory manifestations in our lyrics, because man cannot go further in putting himself on such a low stage, without pride, without a consciousness of value, without a consciousness of a higher meaning and mission. Even this era has everything, the absurd beside the sensible, the beautiful beside the ugly. It is only important what one sees, and that depends on the strength of will and faith, and the ability to perceive the depth and the remoteness. We must be glad that such opinions in our poetry are not to be found often: we belong to a strong family which will be able to rise even above these severe times.

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Karola Dale

CHRIST'S ARRIVAL

As if untouchable the fields are shining white;
Last flakes seem hesitant to settle down.
I have the feeling: I should be as bright
And go my way as if in angel's gown.

Is it a dream? It seems to me I'm flying
And searching for the Dearest One I know.
There are the steeples as a forest lying.
Is there my Dearest One? Is He below?

Oh, now I see: He's crucified, He's dead,
His wounded head hangs low, His hands are bound.
Isn't there a place where I could find Him glad -
A Holy Child with cheerful shepherds round?

He who will stay in darkness and in tears
Tonight won't see the shining holy light.
Oh, come, Pure Light, with brightness and with cheers,
My Dearest One, born in the Holy Night!

* * *

Aleksandrs Liepa

GOD HAS CALLED TO REST A FRIEND OF REFUGEES WHO DID NOT HAVE TIME FOR REST.

For six years Dr. Silvester C. Michlefelder tirelessly worked for the benefit of the European refugees, Europe's expelled people and its destroyed churches. He was the leader of the organization to which most of our readers can be thankful that they are in the United States of America now - that is the Lutheran World Federation.

This autumn God called His faithful servant to Him. Yet a day before he had a heart attack Dr. Michelfelder in his last speech summoned the Christians of America not to weaken in helping the needy in Europe and in other shattered and thrown out of balance lands of the world.

Until summer 1945 Dr. Michelfelder was the pastor in a Lutheran congregation in Toledo, Ohio. For 14 years he faithfully served one and the same congregation. But as soon as World War II ceased, he proceeded to Europe as the first leader of the relief work of the USA Lutheran Church to the bomb-shattered lands. Since that time he permanently resided in Geneva, Switzerland, leading the European relief work of the American Lutherans and since 1947 being also the Executive Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation.

"A church is not a church if she does not care for the satisfying of the physical needs also," once said Dr. Michelfelder. "Physical assistance sometimes is of greater value than saying 'God bless you'. Support to the hungry person is the answer to his prayers."

Acting according to this principle, Dr. Michelfelder spread the European work of the American churches to a much greater extent than was anticipated at first. The organization, which primarily was meant only for spiritual care in the destroyed lands, under the leadership of Dr. Michelfelder became a wide relief organization, which with all possible means helped to realize that which the refugees, left without home and shattered in their hearts, were praying for. The refugee relief branch of the Lutheran World Federation in these years helped to find new homes in America, Canada, Australia and other lands for 80,000 refugees.

No other group of the European refugees has ascertained in such a direct manner the blessing of the introduced and guided word of Dr. Michelfelder than we - the Latvian refugees. The Federation has helped the majority of the Latvians who now are in the United States of America; it has helped many who now are in Canada or Australia; it helps maintain the Latvian churches to those who still are in Germany; on its initiative homes have been established for old people, who have no prospects of emigrating out of Germany; it has provided pastors to the small groups of Latvians who are scattered in Venezuela and other lands.

But, of course, the support to Latvian and other DPs has been only a part of that work which has been accomplished and which will still be accomplished by the Lutheran World Federation and other organizations to which Dr. Michelfelder gave the last years of his life.

On the day before his death he addressed in Chicago the representatives of the organization of the Christian Rural Overseas Program (CROP), which comes from the midst of all the Christian churches in America, and he reminded them that in Germany and Austria there are still about 15 million refugees who need help as badly as in the first post war years.

Dr. Michelfelder (Cont'd)

In the following days Dr. Michelfelder had anticipated speaking at a series of conferences of the Lutheran Church in America, in order to bring a reminder that in the world there still are too many poor to let cease the donations for the noble aims of Lutheran World Action.

But he was not destined to announce these messages anylonger. Dr. Michelfelder, about whom his friends said that he never had time to rest, was called to the eternal rest. He was buried in the cemetery of his native town New Washington, Ohio, but his established Lutheran World Federation exists and will exist, in order to continue accomplishing relief work for the glory of God and the good of men.

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Pastor E. Kiploks

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

V. Practice of the activity.

We will close this introduction about the Lutheran Church in America with an insight into its activity. In this respect there is a great difference between Europe and America. The latter is the land where every individual is in a constant competition with others. Do it faster, accomplish more! He who does not progress goes backwards! This same tempo is transferred also to the church. It is not a peaceful place of meditations and considerations, the temple, as it is in Europe, where everyone individually experiences and realizes in his own perception the spoken word of God. The American church is a fighter for the Christian order of life, it is a staff of the armies of Christian soldiers which do not give any problems but ready orders. Therefore the insights of its activities are richer, wider, more rational, although it seems there is not a deeper perception and personal ideas. Of course, because of the large territory and the many groups of Lutherans the disclosures of its activities are not completely similar. But the methods begin to unify more and more. Thus gradually is originating the normal-type of the Lutheran church. This is very important so that in the future can be organized one consolidated Lutheran church in the United States of America.

One of the widest ramifications of the activities of the American church is the religious education of the youth and their closer approach to the church. American elementary schools do not have classes in religion. That the church itself must provide. The ideal solution would be to establish confessional schools. Unfortunately the Lutheran parochial schools are established only in a few places. In this connection especially, the efforts of the Missouri synod must be emphasized, which in this respect has shown a great interest. However, mostly the aid comes from the Sunday schools, in which the lessons take place either before or after the service or else during the service in the next rooms.

The success of the Sunday schools is greatly dependent on the space available for classes and on the teachers. The latter usually consists of members of the congregation. In building new churches, if the funds permit, many separate rooms are built in order that the work of the Sunday school may go on without interruptions. Mostly, however, the Sunday schools must be content with one large room, which is partitionally divided for the groups (classes) of the Sunday pupils. Here the attention of the pupils, of course, can not be sufficient. As far as I have observed, under these conditions the abilities of the volunteer teachers are also different. Attempts to increase knowledge and interest are made with conferences, meetings, courses and summer camps, and to

relieve their work in the classes by special hand-books, where the referent subjects are discussed and the supplementary theme is also given. The methodical defects in the Sunday schools are greatly filled up with various expedients - movies, pictures, records and well prepared direct educational means such as books, exercise books, painting books and cut-out drawing sheets with religious motives, and also the newspapers of the Sunday school pupils. The lessons are enlivened with games and acts. However, it must be admitted that with all that, religion in the Sunday schools is presented much more abstractly than in our elementary schools.

The children attend Sunday school regularly. That is to the merit of the parents as well as the school itself, which registers the attendance, requires an excuse for absence, and hands out report cards on the results. The Sunday school has become a part of the American life. To it belongs great merit that the children early become familiarised with coming to church regularly. Besides ordinary Sunday school there are also summer vacation Bible schools, which last a few weeks or are continued the whole summer. In the summer the Sunday school pupils are gathered in Bible camps, where physical exercises and games change places with the Bible studies and camp songs, which also are with the religious touch.

Parallel to the Sunday schools the youth is brought nearer to the church also by various youth organizations in the shelter of the congregation; for example, scouts and Luther League or Walther League (corresponding to our youth circles). Confessional high schools (usually called academies) are as few as the congregational schools, but instead the churches can be proud of the very good standing of the higher educational institutions - colleges. Most Lutherans have started or ended their higher education there and they have proved to be a very favorable factor in the life of the church. From the college graduates come the greater part of the congregational personnel and the Sunday school teachers.

(To be continued)

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Pastor Osv. Gulbis

WHEN BARTHOLOMEW WAS NOT RIGHT

A Christmas Legend.

Bartholomew was not a strong man. He was a lean, rather small fellow who did not talk much. So he was not the right rival for such strong men as the Lefthander or Bartholomew's own brother Alpheus. When the flocks were driven together and the shepherds contended - more with their monotonous day than with their rival - Bartholomew made no troubles even to Cleopas and Thadeus, though both of them were quite sure that there would come a day when they would throw even the Lefthander and Alpheus, both bigboned champions. Unfortunately this day did not want to come. The brave words usually were spoken when looking at the stronger partner with a squinting eye and when shaking off the dust. There was no use in looking at Bartholomew with a squinting eye. No one could say that Bartholomew had an evil heart either. Once the shepherds were discussing something for a long time - not only in Bethlehem but also in Shechem, and that is not a distance for only an arm's stretch indeed. The question was: which one Bartholomew rescued that time - the Lefthander's lamb or the Lefthander himself? The event was rather common. A lamb had lost its flock and fallen in a hollow. It can happen to everyone. That time it happened to the Lefthander, who certainly hurried to rescue his property. He could see it. The hollow was not deep. But how to reach the lamb? He knelt down, but he could not reach it with his hand. He tried to climb down, but he almost fell in. The border was not solid enough. In the meantime the lamb

bleated because it was frightened. What was Lefthander to do? He could not rescue the lamb, but he could not leave it to a slow death either. The strong man pressed his ears closed and stood there like a pillar of salt. Then Bartholomew arrived in time. He leapt the hollow, climbed down the other wall, brought up the lamb and put it into the Lefthander's arms: Here you are, and be more careful! Could that man have an evil heart?

Bartholomew's heart, however, was really known only by them who saw how anxious Bartholomew was for his brother Alpheus. Something had been wrong with the eyes of Alpheus since long ago. When he, however, even in a bright daytime mixed up the sun with the moon, the shepherds exchanged looks. Was it so bad? Yes, Alpheus was blind. And now already in the second winter Bartholomew dressed him and guided him, comforted him and wheedled him like a mother her sick baby.

No, to Bartholomew's heart and strength Cleopa and Thadeus had no objection. Bartholomew's strength could not harm and his heart - who knew? - some day could be of use. There was but one thing: Bartholomew was always right. You might say or do this or that, but Bartholomew would know better, and he would be right. For instance, there was a night when you had a bad dream: you were chained and cast in jail. The executioner's axe was already lifted above your head. Being started up you woke yourfriends: Say, what could it mean? So Bartholomew also raised up his head: My dear, it means you have tasted the unripe figs last night. They will be eatable but next week. And Bartholomew was right. The figs really were not ripe. Willing to justify yourself you asked: Don't you ever dream, Bartholomew? And he shook his head: No. Night is for sleeping. There was another time. Lying in the grass with your hands under your neck, you were enthusiastic about the blue skies above you: what fine weather! But as soon you had uttered it as soon you regreted it, for Bartholomew was also looking up to the skies. There will be rain, he said. And of course, the sun was not set when the skies became cloudy and rain was at hand. Bartholomew was right again. Sometimes you became just wrathful. That night it happened to Thadeus.

The whole day was rainy and when it darkened Thadeus tried to kindle a campfire. The fire, however, did not want to burn. Bartholomew watched and watched, then he pushed Thadeus aside and said: You won't kindle like that. Let me! However, these couple of words and this friendly touch of his hand, it seemed, had called fire down from the skies. Certainly, the campfire still did not burn. But the stoker did. Thadeus dropped the wisp of straw, pressed his hands into his waist and panted: I'll tell you somtehing, Bartholomew. Let us do like Abraham and Lot did: you go to your right, both I and Cleopa we'll go to our left."

"Sorry," said Bartholomew quite calmly. "I can't get along alone with my flock."

"I do not care," Thadeus gave a quick reply. "It's your flock, do as you can."

"You aren't right, Thadeus," continued Bartholomew in the same calm way. "It isn't mine. It is mine and my brother's flock. Alpheus cannot help me anymore. So you both have to help. Maybe you aren't my friends, but it is not me you must help. You have to help Alpheus. He is your friend, isn't he?"

Nothing to do. Alpheus was their friend and they wanted to help him, even though after he lost his sight Alpheus had become morose and sad, and they did not like him like that at all. Should he therefore hang his head, they thought, when they saw their friend who, in order to avoid people, dwelled in lonely places, where he thought nobody could see him - sitting with his head hanging down and with his back leaned against a tree or a stone

- no matter rain or sunshine. When food was brought to him, as long as he felt the bringer near he would not touch it. His brother as well as his friends begged him: Won't you come to the campfire in the night at least, dear. The beasts could tear you in pieces here. The usual answer was: Let me alone! I beg you, let me alone! Both Thadeus and Cleopa had put him the same question also tonight, but, alas, in vain. The beasts will devour me? Allright, it will be better for me and you...

The night had wrapped the stars in thick clouds and forced herself to the herdsmen's campfire. Ugh, there was still light and warmth! The shepherds did not think so. The night cooled them more than the fire warmed them. The campfire was feeble and the night was one of those when no one likes to move.

"It must be terrible indeed when each day for Alpheus is like this night," thinks Cleopa and feels a shudder creep up his back. "If Alpheus would have light just as this campfire!" Thadeus also feels the shudder, but he shakes it off with a toss as if it were a viper that warmed by the fire, had crept under his coat. Thadeus has something different to think about: Why is Bartholomew always right? And will people like him always be right? Fairy tales, they say, are but for children, and dreams they do not see. Probably those people too do not have an easy life to live. Nevertheless Bartholomew would need some punishment. Thadeus knows what men like him do not like.

"What would you say, Cleopa," Thadeus says to Cleopa, but he really means Bartholomew. "What would you say, Cleopa, if the king invited us to see him in his palace?"

"What for?" the addressed asks, scared.

"Well, there's light, a thousand candles on a thousand candlesticks, music, harps and pipes. Wouldn't it be fine?"

"And you would go?"

"Ha, why not?"

"Well, what about the flock. Who would keep watch over the flock?"

"But certainly, Bartholomew. He wouldn't come."

Bartholomew frowns, wants to say something, then he gives this intention up: silly talk!

"Yes, I would go", repeats Thadeus, still waiting for Bartholomew's opposition. "I would go. And when I would sit beside the king at his table I would say: 'My king, you have gold and silver and precious stones. You have your castle and thousand candles. You beckon with your right hand and you have exalted one. You beckon with your left and you have annihilated another. My king, we have a friend, the brother of Bartholomew, a fine shepherd, strong as a lion, but he can't see anymore. He avoids people and now he is in a dark night outdoors and alone, where the beasts will devour him. My king, let him sit on your castle's staircase. The brightness of your candlelights he won't see, but he will listen to your musicians' harps and pipes. He will sit quit in the corner. He won't bother yout friends.' 'Good,' the king would say, 'let him come.' 'But I have one wish more,' I would say. 'My king, you know everything. Certainly you have heard also of Simon's widow, poor woman with five small children. The smallest still has not completed his third year. They turned her out today. Where should she go? A heavy job she couldn't stand. Won't you give her a lighter job in your kitchen?...'"

Bartholomew does not listen further. He is cold, colder than ever before. He throws upon

the campfire a handful of herbs, the fire flashes over the backs of the lying flock, but Bartholomew does not become warmer. This is what he is worrying about. There are the blind, the old ones, the lonely ones, the lepers - they really need help, but who would help them? The king? Can the king give to his brother Alpheus his eyesight? Will the king take Simon's widow to his palace? It was the king's servants who turned her out. The king possibly does not know what happened, but who would tell him? Will it be Thadeus? Alas, the things will be as they were before: the low ones will be low, the high ones will be high, the strong ones will trample down the weak ones... Feeling tired Bartholomew looks around in the dark. In the windows of Bethlehem there are but a few lights left. It is late. People have gone to bed.

Bartholomew yawns and, as if waited for, sleep is at hand. But with sleep - a dream. The Dream looks at Bartholomew, smiles and asks: Do you know me? No, says Bartholomew. I have never seen you before. Well, then look carefully. There aren't many who see me. Now, what do you see? Wait a moment, wait a moment, shouts Bartholomew, where do you guide me? It seems to Bartholomew that he is in a market. All are crowding round a man. Bartholomew does too. "What do they sell here?" he asks a bent down granny. "Everything, my dear, everything - youth to the old ones, healthy limbs to the lame, hearing ears to the deaf ones and seeing eyes to the blind ones. Buy but a twig and you shall have what you need." How much does it cost? asks Bartholomew, raising on his toes. "Not much," says the granny. "Thousand silver pieces." Thousand silver pieces! repeats Bartholomew frightened. Where shall I get such richness? Silly boy, the granny instructs him. It's the tears. Don't you see that even a child enjoys such richness. - The people smooth the way for him and Bartholomew feels face to face with the Vendor, but he cannot look at Him. He only sees: there is a child with his hands stretched out and they are full of silver. "Now, what do you want, my child?" the Vendor asks, and takes the small hands in his. "My God," Bartholomew can hardly suppress his loud shout, "it is the smallest of the widow's five!" "Some bread," says the child. "All right, take a twig," the Vendor says and bends his head. On His head he has a crown of thorns. Bartholomew does not know what happens to the child. He hears the Vendor addressing him: "And what do you want?" "I?" repeats Bartholomew. "I don't want anything! my brother, however..."

"Bartholomew, Bartholomew!" somebody shakes his shoulder. "A minute, a minute!" says Bartholomew in thoughts, "I'll be..." and stretches after the twig of the crown of thorns.

"Are you sleeping, Bartholomew?" the waking voice asks. There is no Vendor or buyers anymore. Bartholomew's eyelids should be lifted. He feels it is two men's work. Bartholomew however, has to lift them himself. Nevertheless, his eyes are open at last.

"Bartholomew, did you see it also?" It is Cleopa, who asks.

"What, what did I see?" asks Bartholomew searching for words. Then he remembers his dream, smiles sadly and nods. "Yes, the dream."

"No, no! Didn't you see, didn't you hear?..."

"Didn't you see the angel?" Thadeus helps out.

"No," says Bartholomew surprised. "Was it an angel? Wasn't it the Vendor?"

"No, the angel, the angel!" shout both Cleopa and Thadeus together.

"Oh, Lord, God!" at last Cleopa begins to relate. "I won't forget it all my life through: it was as light as the day and the angel stood, look, there at that stone. I was shaking in every limb. I couldn't utter my name if I had been asked."

"I thought I was dying," interrupted Thadeus. "But the angel said: Fear not. For a Savior is born unto you this day."

"Savior?" Bartholomew suddenly wants to know and stands up. "You said Savior? Where?"

Cleopa turns toward Bethlehem. "There. The angel's words still resound in my ears: Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day a Savior, which is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes... you shall find... Thadeus how was it?"

"You shall find the babe in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger," Thadeus concludes.

"In a manger?" asks Bartholomew disappointed. "Are you positive - in a manger?"

"Yes," Cleopa accords, "in a manger."

Without saying a word Bartholomew sits down. The campfire has burnt out. There still are glowing but few charcoals. All has burnt out.

"Come, let us go!" shouts Cleopa and shakes Bartholomew's shoulder.

"Don't go to sleep again."

"I'm not asleep," says Bartholomew."But there is no use in going. You have seen but a dream. A Savior won't be in a manger. The Savior is great and high. He is God's Anointed, the King of Kings."

"Incredible," says Thadeus, taking a seat and shaking his head. "Bartholomew, it can't be that you were right even this time. It wasn't a dream. I was not asleep. I saw it with my own eyes. Look, over there..."

Well, what is there? Stopped halfway in a word the narrator stares in the dark. It seems that someone is coming. Both Thadeus and Cleopa exchange looks. Shall they flee? Shall they grasp the cudgel? Is it a beast?

"Who is coming?" Bartholomew asks, but even his voice trembles a little this time. "Who are you? Answer?"

There is no answer, but the moon parts the clouds and throws down her silver bridge. Across the moonbridge there is Alpheus coming. He smiles.

"Where are you going? What's the matter with you?" ask both his brother and his friends.

"Answer."

"I can see again," says Alpheus very quietly as if not he but the night itself were talking.

"I can see again! It seems to me I'm not on earth anymore. It seems I am already in heaven. Oh, you cannot imagine what I saw! I was sitting and thinking: why have I such a destiny? How have I sinned? Why has God punished me so hard, be like one who has been buried alive, with darkness all around. Suddenly I felt I could see again. The earth it seemed, had disappeared from under my feet. I was as if on the sea. Water was trembling and glittering. The east flushed. A sunrise? No, a man in white appeared and stood before me.

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When Bartholomew Was Not Right. (Cont'd)

An apparition, an angel!..."

"What did he say?"

"Fear not! Unto you is born a Savior this day."

"Go ahead! Go ahead! What else did he say?"

"I don't remember."

"Didn't he say where you can find Him?"

"Oh, yes. Now I remember: you shall find the babe in a manger."

"In a manger!" says Bartholomew, grasping his brother's hand. "In a manger! I just can't believe it. Then Thadeus is right and you and Cleopa. A Savior in a manger!..."

- - -

"... (then) the shepherds said one to another: Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds..." (Luke 2:15b-18).

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